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Republic Day 2026: Obama To Macron - A Look At Republic Day Chief Guests Over The Years

Republic Day 2026:
Over the years, several global leaders have been invited to the Republic Day celebrations, including Obama, Macron, Bolsonaro, and many others.

New Delhi.(Agency)

India will celebrate its 77th Republic Day on January 26, with top European Union (EU) leaders Ursula von der Leyen and Antonio Costa set to attend the grand ceremony as chief guests. This is the first time that leaders from the EU will participate as chief guests. Over the years, several global leaders have been invited to the Republic Day celebrations. Here's the list of Republic Day chief guests over the years:

Barack Obama

Obama became the first US president to be invited as the chief guest at Republic Day in 2015.

Francois Hollande

The former French president was

invited as the chief guest to the 67th Republic Day. France and India have long-standing defence and strategic ties.

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan

In 2017, Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan was invited as the Republic Day chief guest, who, at that time, was the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the UAE. He is currently the president of the UAE.

ASEAN Leaders

Leaders from all 10 member nations of ASEAN - Thailand, Vietnam,



Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos, and Brunei - were invited as chief guests in 2018.

Cyril Ramaphosa

The South African President was invited to the Republic Day

celebrations as the chief guest in 2019 after Nelson Mandela in 1995.

This was the first visit to India by President Ramaphosa as Head of State.

Jair Bolsonaro

In 2020, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's invitation as the Republic Day chief guest was the third time a president of Brazil had been invited to the grand event after Fernando Henrique Cardoso in 1996 and Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva in 2004.

2021 and 2022

India did not invite any foreign chief guest for Republic Day due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Abdel Fattah el-Sisi

For the first time, the President of the Arab Republic of Egypt was invited as the chief guest for the Republic Day celebration in 2023.

Emmanuel Macron

His visit in 2024 marked the 6th time a Head of State of France was invited as the Republic Day chief guest. France has been one of India's most-frequent Republic Day chief guest partners for decades.

Prabowo Subianto

The President of Indonesia was invited to be the chief guest for the 76th Republic Day in 2025. His visit marked the fourth time an Indonesian leader was invited for a grand occasion.

Rashtriya Janata Dal appoints Tejashwi Yadav as working president

The Sikh Times



Patna: RJD chief Lalu Prasad's younger son and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav was on Sunday named the working president of the party at its national executive meeting here. Yadav's elevation comes after the RJD's drubbing in the recent assembly polls, which the 'Mahagathbandhan' had fought with the 36-year-old leader as its chief ministerial candidate. In a post on X, the Rashtriya Janata Dal said the decision, which makes clear the line of succession in the party, was taken at its national executive meeting, which was attended by Yadav, Prasad and other senior leaders. Yadav's eldest sister and Patliputra MP Misa Bharti, who was said to be eyeing that party post, was also present at the meeting. Tejashwi, a former deputy chief minister of Bihar, is currently the leader of the opposition in the Assembly. He had, on Saturday, appeared confident of his elevation in the party, as he had told workers at the RJD office that he was thinking of revamping the party structure from the booth level. Yadav and

his close aides, like Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Yadav, were squarely blamed for the poll debacle by his elder sister Rohini Acharya, who also alleged that when she insisted that accountability be fixed, abuses were hurled at her. Yadav's elder brother Tej Pratap Yadav, who had made his political debut along with the former in 2015, was expelled from the party by Prasad last year, understandably at the insistence of the image-conscious younger sibling. Tej Pratap has since floated his own outfit, Janshakti Janta Dal, which is yet to make an impact.

People paying a heavy price for air pollution with their health: Rahul Gandhi

The Sikh Times



New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday said people are paying a heavy price for air pollution with their health and the country's economy, and that children and the elderly are bearing the brunt the most. In a post on his X account, the Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha urged people to speak up against air pollution. He also asked them to write to him, sharing their views on how it has affected crores of Indians. "We are paying a heavy price for air pollution - with our health and with our economy. Crores of ordinary Indians bear this burden every day," Gandhi wrote. "Children and the elderly suffer the most. Livelihoods, especially of construction workers and daily wage earners, are severely impacted," he wrote. Noting that the crisis cannot be forgotten until next winter, the former Congress president said, "The first step towards change is to raise our voices." He further asked people to share the story of "how air pollution has affected you or your loved ones" at <https://rahulgandhi.in/awaazbharatki>. Gandhi has been raising the issue of air pollution. He had demanded a discussion on the issue during the Winter Session of Parliament.

77^{वें} गणतंत्र दिवस

की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ

नरेन्द्र मोदी
प्रधानमंत्री

भारत का लोकतंत्र, भारत का गणतंत्रिक अतीत बहुत ही समृद्ध रहा है, विश्व के लिए प्रेरक रहा है और तभी तो, भारत आज मदर ऑफ डेमोक्रेसी के रूप में जाना जाता है।

- नरेन्द्र मोदी

रेखा गुप्ता
मुख्यमंत्री, दिल्ली

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News box

3 men die in separate accidents in Gurgaon’s Kherki Daula

Gurgaon.(Agency)
Three men lost their lives, while another was seriously injured, in three separate road accidents in the Kherki Daula area on Friday. All the vehicles involved fled the spot, police said.In the first incident, an unidentified vehicle rammed a motorcycle from behind near Silvertrack Hospital in Sector 87 at around 6.30pm. Two youths riding the bike sustained serious injuries and were rushed to the Civil Hospital in Sector 10, where one of them was declared dead.The deceased, Abhishek Chauhan, a resident of Auraiya district of UP, worked as a housekeeping staff at a hotel in Sector 24 and lived in a rented house in S Block of the same sector with his brother, Anuj. In his complaint, Anuj told police that Abhishek went to Manesar on Friday to meet his friend Govind. The two were riding a bike for some work when a vehicle hit them from behind near Silvertrack Hospital. Abhishek succumbed to his injuries, while Govind was admitted to a hospital with serious injuries.
In another incident on Friday evening, an unidentified vehicle hit a youth who was walking near the Kherki Daula underpass. Passersby rushed the injured man to a local hospital, where doctors declared him dead. The deceased is yet to be identified, as no documents were found on him. The body was kept in the mortuary, police said.In the third case, a 25-year-old pedestrian was killed after being hit by a water tanker on the highway service road near Kherki Daula village at around 8pm. The deceased, a resident of Pathankot in Punjab, worked in a private company and lived in a rented house near Kherki Daula.

16 Indian sailors held in Iran get consular access, speak with kin

Noida.(Agency)
Sailors detained in Iran last Dec after Islamic Revolutionary Guard seized oil tanker MT Valiant Roar have been able to speak to their families after being granted consular access, which happened after the Indian govt intervened. While their families here remain anxious about how and when their repatriation will happen, there is, for now, some relief.
"At least we now know they are alive and coping with the situation," said Mukesh Mehta, after speaking to his son, merchant navy engineer Ketan, for the first time since Dec 31. "That alone is a huge relief."
Ketan is one of 18 sailors—including 16 Indians, one Sri Lankan, and one Bangladeshi—detained after the MT Valiant Roar was intercepted on Dec 8 in international waters near the port of Dibba, UAE. Of the crew, 10 were moved to Bandar Abbas prison, while eight remain confined on the vessel, including Ketan.
During the call on Jan 21, Ketan told his family that the crew had not been informed of the specific reasons for their detention, nor of any charges framed against them, but were being provided food and basic necessities. He also told his father that none of them had been produced before a court and had been given no indication of how long they might be held. "Now we are waiting for the next call," Mukesh told TOI from his home in Ghaziabad.Indian consular officials have also told the sailors that no formal charges have been framed as the Iranian authorities were still awaiting the cargo sample test report.Iran alleged that the tanker was involved in the smuggling of nearly 6,000 tonnes of fuel.Relatives of Indian sailors claimed tanker was carrying only very low sulphur fuel oil.
Captain Vijay Kumar, the vessel's master and one of the eight crew members still on board, spoke to his cousin Vinod Kumar, a merchant navy officer in Noida, on Jan 23 and said they are confined to the ship's mess room under constant guard. "They are not allowed to leave," Vinod said. "They are making do with the remaining food stocks and cooking with very limited supplies."

Humiliated, assaulted’: Greater Noida BTech student jumps to death after hostel calls father over drinking with friends

Gurgaon.(Agency)
A second-year BTech student died after jumping from the fourth floor of his private hostel in Greater Noida's Knowledge Park 3, hours after being reprimanded for consuming alcohol, police said. His friends claimed he felt humiliated and accused the hostel staff of assaulting him.According to police, Udit Soni, who came to Greater Noida from Jhansi's Bhognipur, had returned to the hostel late on Friday evening with two friends after drinking. Hostel authorities confronted the three students for violating rules and allegedly recorded a video of the incident, which was later sent to Udit's father, Vijay.Udit's father later spoke to him over the phone, scolding him and warning that he would be removed from the hostel and brought back home. A senior officer said Udit appeared distressed after the call and jumped from the fourth floor shortly afterwards. Udit was rushed to a nearby hospital but was declared dead on arrival.The incident sparked anger among students, some of whom vandalised parts of the hostel and damaged buses parked nearby. Police personnel had to be deployed to bring the situation under control, while senior officers visited the campus and held discussions with students to defuse tensions.One of Udit's friends, Harshit, a BBA student who lived in the same hostel, alleged that the situation escalated despite the students agreeing to pay a fine for violating rules and drinking. "Udit, Chetan and I had stepped out earlier in the evening and returned around 9pm, well before the hostel's 10pm deadline. But the hostel management imposed a fine for drinking. We accepted it and Udit paid Rs 10,000," he said.Harshit alleged that after the fine was paid, hostel staff assaulted Udit in front of others. "There was a large crowd.

Wind brings chill back after rain, minimum temperature drops by 7°C in Gurgaon

Gurgaon.(Agency)
The minimum temperature in the city dropped sharply over the past 24 hours, falling by nearly 7 degrees to 7.3 degrees Celsius on Saturday, compared with 14.1 degrees Celsius a day earlier.
In Noida Meteorological Department (IMD) attributed the dip to cold north-westerly winds sweeping across north India after a western disturbance moved eastwards. Moreover, the city is likely to receive another spell of light to moderate rainfall on Tuesday. According to the weather department, a western disturbance is expected to affect northwest India from Jan 26. This system is likely to influence weather conditions across the region, with light to moderate rain at isolated places across the state, along with thunderstorms, lightning and gusty winds of 30 to 40kmph."Light to moderate rainfall is likely on Jan 26 and 28, with the peak intensity and wider spread expected on Jan 27. Dense to very dense fog may occur during night and early morning hours at some places in Haryana on Sunday and Monday. Cold wave conditions may also prevail at isolated locations. We are not expecting any major change in minimum temperatures over the next two days. However, temperatures are likely to rise by 4-6 degrees Celsius over the subsequent two days and fall again by 3-5 degrees Celsius after the system moves away," an IMD official said.IMD data showed the city recorded 15mm of rainfall in the 24-hour period ending at 8.30 am on Saturday. Moderate fog was reported in some parts of the city in the morning, with visibility dropping to around 400m. Skies later cleared, allowing sunshine through the day.



Rash driver hits car, sparks panic at Gurgaon petrol pump

Ghaziabad.(Agency)
A major disaster was averted at a petrol pump in Farukhnagar when a WagonR rammed into another customer's car and then crashed into a fuel dispensing machine, causing petrol and diesel to leak and triggering panic among staff and customers.The incident occurred around 12.45pm on Jan 19 when the WagonR car, bearing a temporary number, entered the premises at a very high speed. Police said the driver, Ramniwas, was allegedly driving rashly and negligently.
According to petrol pump officials, the car first struck another customer's vehicle that had lined up at a separate fuel dispensing machine. It rammed into another fuel vending unit with such force that the vehicle climbed onto the machine. A petrol pump salesman, Manoj, narrowly escaped injury. The impact damaged the dispenser, causing both petrol and diesel to spill, creating a fire risk. Petrol pump staff swiftly cordoned off the affected area and brought the situation under control. A pump official, Ranjit Singh, said, "We called the police control room. Soon, a police personnel reached the spot, followed by the team from Farukhnagar police station."Singh told TOI that the situation could have been worse that day. "God saved us. There were four or five staff members on duty, along with customers who had come to refuel. A big accident was averted."
He said the driver claimed that he had retired from the Indian Army. "The way the new WagonR was driven inside the petrol pump was dangerous. As soon as fuel started leaking, we immediately rushed to

turn off the emergency switch and cut the power supply to prevent any spark," he said.In his complaint, Ranjit Singh stated that the incident endangered the lives of employees and customers present at the petrol pump. He also estimated the damage to the fuel dispensing machine and disruption of operations at Rs 2.5 lakh.
Police said a complaint was submitted on Jan 23, following which an FIR was registered under sections 281 (rash driving), 125 (rashness or negligence that endanger human life or personal safety) and 324(4) (mischief) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).
"A case was registered and further investigation is under way to determine the circumstances leading to the incident and to initiate further legal action against

Expedite shifting of toll plaza from Kherki Daula to Pachgaon, says Union minister Rao Inderjit Singh

Noida.(Agency)
Union minister and MP Rao Inderjit Singh reviewed the progress of shifting the Kherki Daula toll plaza and asked officials to accelerate the process and ensure smooth, safe and uninterrupted movement for villagers and commuters during the construction of the proposed toll plaza at Pachgaon. He emphasised that local residents, farmers and daily travellers must not face any obstruction as the shift is carried out.Singh said Pachgaon is emerging as a key growth zone, with an upcoming HSIIDC industrial area and the proposed Namu Bharat (RRTS) station. In the meeting, it was decided that all departments would jointly prepare a practical proposal within a week and present it to the police, followed by a coordination meeting on traffic arrangements."Pachgaon Chowk area is going to be extremely important from a development perspective in the future. HSIIDC is proposed to develop an industrial area here, which will create new employment opportunities. Additionally, a 'Namo Bharat' train station under the RRTS project is also proposed in this area. In such a situation, shifting Pachgaon Toll Plaza and ensuring no obstruction in the traffic by Feb 15, which will provide great relief to people in the area. The target was set to open the northern part of the road by the 1st week of March. However, construction work on railway flyovers near Pahadi village is still in progress, and instructions were given to complete it within the stipulated timeframe. The Union minister clarified that there should be no compromise on the quality of construction work, and the work should be completed in a time-bound manner.
On the traffic jam occurring due to flyover construction at Bilaspur Chowk, Singh said, "Effective alternative traffic management arrangements should be made so that common people do not face unnecessary inconvenience." He also reviewed the work on the under-construction flyover at Rathiwas bus stop and directed the concerned officials to expedite the construction work so that area residents can get relief from the jam problem as soon as possible.



Rain brings down mercury in Gurgaon, not AQI

Gurgaon.(Agency)
The city's air quality stayed in the 'poor' category on Saturday, with the air quality index (AQI) at 228, almost unchanged from 227 a day earlier, despite light rain on Friday.Data from the air quality monitoring network showed that three of the four stations continued to record 'poor' air. Vikas Sadan recorded the highest AQI at 240, followed by Sector 51 at 239, while Gwal Pahari logged an AQI of 204. Forecasts suggest that any sustained improvement is unlikely in the near future, with air quality expected to hover between the 'poor' and 'very poor' categories over the coming days.
According to the system of air quality and weather forecasting and research (Safar), meteorological conditions are not favourable for the dispersion of pollutants. Predominant surface winds are expected to blow from the northwest at speeds of less than 15kmph during the morning hours, weakening further to around 10kmph in the afternoon. Wind speeds are likely to drop to about 8kmph during the evening and night, further limiting pollutant dispersal. Safar also projected a maximum



mixing depth of around 800m and a ventilation index of about 3,000 m²/s on Sunday. "A ventilation index below 6,000 m²/s, combined with average wind speeds of less than 10kmph, is unfavourable for the dispersion of pollutants," Safar noted.
Independent air quality expert Sachin Panwar said the brief

spell of rain on Friday and slightly stronger winds offered only limited relief.
"Rain and better wind speeds helped flush pollutants to an extent, which is evident from improved visibility. However, lower temperatures are now causing local pollutants to remain trapped near the surface due to poor vertical mixing. If

rainfall continues for two to three days, a more noticeable improvement is possible. Otherwise, air quality is likely to hover in the poor category as temperatures drop further and ventilation conditions weaken," he said.
Particulate pollution levels remained alarmingly high across the city.

PM2.5 concentrations exceeded safe limits at all monitoring stations, with Gwal Pahari recording 337 µg/m³, followed by Vikas Sadan at 324 µg/m³ and Sector 51 at 311 µg/m³.

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Empowering People, Building Rangla Punjab



Bhagwant Singh Mann
Chief Minister, Punjab

India today takes pride in being the largest democratic Republic in the world, which is the result of both our long and unparalleled movement for independence and of the unique constitution which the country adopted on January 26, 1950. The day assumes far more significance as our constitution came into force on January 26, 1950 following relentless efforts of great national leaders and statesmen. The constitution embodies the quest for happy and prosperous life in an egalitarian society and it enshrines the cardinal principles of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. The architects of our sacred Constitution have given us a Parliamentary Democracy which aims at social progress and equal opportunities of livelihood besides quality life for all. The Constituent Assembly kept in view the fact that India is a country rich in cultural, religious, linguistic and regional diversity. Such a diverse country needed a constitution which truly reflected deep and profound respect for this diversity. Universal Adult Franchise had to be the bed rock on which the constitution was based. It was really a moment of glory for all of us as we got the power to exercise our franchise, fulfilling the cherished aspirations of our forefathers of having the 'Government of the

people, for the people and by the people'. With every passing day during around 75 years the ethos of democratic republic has been strengthened in the country as the countrymen had displayed unflinching faith in democratic norms and given a clear verdict in favour of the 'ballot' without any fear. The freedom movement of India was spearheaded by some of the greatest political minds who championed the cause of secular democracy like Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru, Dr. BR Ambedkar, Shaheed-e-Azam Sardar Bhagat Singh, Shaheed Rajguru, Shaheed Sukhdev, Shaheed Kartar Singh Sarabha and others. It is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction for all of us that Punjabis have inherited an indomitable spirit of self sacrifice and patriotism from our Great Sikh gurus who have taught us to fight against oppression, tyranny and injustice. A dream envisaged by our great forefathers of an Independent and sovereign Indian Republic was fulfilled due to enormous sacrifices made by the countrymen in general and Punjabis during the fight against the mighty British Raj. None could ever forget the unparalleled sacrifices made by the Punjabis at the altar of the Indian National freedom struggle. The country today proudly recalls the stellar role played by thousands of unsung heroes across the country, especially the sons of the soil who not only remained in the vanguard of the national freedom struggle but whose courageous deeds also inspired millions of others to join the 'war for independence'. Despite being merely two percent of the country's population, 80% of the martyrs either executed or exiled during the freedom struggle were

Punjabis.

Besides being the land of watershed movements of Indian freedom struggle like Kuka, Ghadar, Kisan and others, Punjab produced sons of the soil like Lala Lajpat Rai, Diwan Singh Kalepani and others who laid their lives for emancipating the country from the clutches of British Imperialism. The heroic deeds of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Shaheed Rajguru, Shaheed Sukhdev, Shaheed Udharn Singh and Kartar Singh Sarabha gave new vigor to the national freedom struggle by inspiring the generations to rise against British imperialism. Likewise, the brutal killing of innocent people in the Jallianwala Bagh massacre proved to be a last nail in the coffin of the barbaric British rule. Likewise, Indians especially the Punjabis have thwarted any attempt aimed at endangering the hard earned sovereignty of the country. Apart from safeguarding the country during wars in 1947, 1962, 1965, 1971 and then Kargil war our brave patriots have made supreme sacrifices to protect the dignity and sovereignty of the nation. Most recently our brave forces have given a befitting reply to escalating tension at the border which was clearly an attack on national sovereignty. Our valiant soldiers foiled the nefarious designs of anti-national elements from across the borders. Similarly, Punjabis have always been on forefront in several other operations to save our country from internal insurgency to maintain peace, law and order. Apart from it, Punjabis have been at centre stage in ensuring prosperity and overall develop-

ment of the country besides safeguarding the borders of the nation from the external aggressions. Even during the period of crisis, we the brave Punjabis have never let our high spirits go down. On the contrary, they have strengthened the ethos of democracy by reposing full faith in the constitution of the nation. Despite our limited natural resources the farmers of the state have put their sweat and toil to make the country self reliant in food production, that too at the cost of overexploitation of the only available natural resources of the state, water level and soil fertility. Though as a Republic we have successfully achieved several milestones despite numerous odds but still much was needed to be done. The dreams of the founding fathers of the Constitution still remain to be realized as most of our countrymen are afflicted with the maladies of poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and starvation. Notwithstanding over seven decades of planned development we have not been able to ensure basic minimal services to our people as inequities between the states and people continue to grow. Large sections of our rural population and even those residing in urban slums are still to partake of the fruits of growth and development. For the last four years our government is making all out efforts to cherish the aspirations of the founding fathers of the Constitution by building a Punjab of their dreams sans poverty, illiteracy, unemployment and other social evils. We are following the footsteps of our great Gurus, Saints and

Seers to maintain communal harmony, peace and amity in the state at all costs for taking off Punjab in the orbit of high growth trajectory. To herald an era of unprecedented development in the state and to put Punjab on the fast track of development, our Government has taken bold initiatives to make it a frontrunner state on the country's map which are as under:

MUKH MANTRI SEHAT YOJNA

In order to provide comprehensive healthcare to people the state government has launched Mukh Mantri Sehat Yojna- the first-of-its-kind scheme in the country that provides cashless medical treatment up to Rs 10 lakh for every resident family in Punjab. It is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that Punjab is the first Indian state to offer such comprehensive healthcare coverage, which will significantly ease the financial burden on the public while ensuring quality health services. This historic move is aimed at providing universal health care to all the families of the state. All the government employees, pensioners, and every other citizen will be eligible for the health card which can be obtained from facilitation centres and Common Service Centres, or through online registration using Aadhaar card or voter card.

YUDH NASHEAN VIRUDH

The Punjab government has launched a deci-

sive battle Yudh Nashean Virudh to make Punjab a drug-free state by dismantling supply lines, sending drug peddlers to jail, destroying houses of drug traffickers and treatment and rehabilitation of drug victims has been carried out. From March 1, 2025, to January 17, 2026 as many as 31,441 cases have been registered under the NDPS Act, 45,137 drug traffickers arrested, drug money worth Rs 15.47 crore have been recovered, 386 big fish arrested, property worth Rs 299 crore of drug traffickers seized. The second phase of the Yudh Nashean Virudh has been launched and 3,083 rural playgrounds are being developed in Punjab to channelize the energy of Youth in a positive manner.

GANGSTARA TE VAAR

After making substantive progress in the ongoing anti-drugs campaign 'Yudh Nashean Virudh', the Punjab Government has now launched 'Gangstara Te War', a decisive war against gangsters aimed at making Punjab a gangster-free state. A massive statewide crackdown against gangsters began with as many as 2,000 police teams, comprising over 12,000 police personnel, conducting raids at identified and mapped locations linked to associates of 60 foreign-based gangsters across Punjab. A

well-strategized war against gangsters with the clear intent of eliminating the entire ecosystem of gangsterism, including their financing, logistics, safe houses, weapon supply chains and communication networks. An Anti-Gangster Helpline number, 93946-93946, has been launched enabling citizens to anonymously share information about wanted criminals and gangsters, and to provide tips related to crime and criminal activity.

REVENUE REFORMS

In order to ensure transparent, efficient and corruption free delivery of revenue services to the people the state government has launched Easy registry and Easy Jamabandi Portal. These revolutionary initiatives reflect the honesty, transparency, and pro-people mindset of the state government. No other state of the country has such robust revenue reforms and will herald a new era of public facilitation.

AAM AADMI CLINICS

In order to impart quality healthcare services to people, the state government has set up 881 Aam Aadmi clinics across Punjab which have revolutionised the health care

sector in the state. Around 70,000 patients are taking the benefits of these clinics daily in the state and more than 95% of patients visiting these clinics daily recover from their ailments. Now the state government has launched WhatsApp Chatbot for 881 Aam Aadmi Clinics through which Patients can receive complete health-related information via WhatsApp and Doctor's prescription slips will be accessible through the chatbot.

FREE POWER

The Punjab government has launched the guarantee to provide free power to the people in 2022 and since then 90% of the households in the state are getting free power and have got zero power bills. This has reduced a big burden on the pocket of the common man by saving a minimum Rs 35,000 annually for poor households. It is also a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that along with domestic consumers, the food growers of the country are also getting free and uninterrupted power in the state. **Contd..page-**

NAME CHANGE

I hitherto known as Abdul Qayyum alias Qayyum Ali S/O. Abdul Hakim, R/O C-11, Block-C, Raju Park, VTC, Kharpur, PO, Pusa, Bhabra, Sub District. Hauz Khas. District. South Delhi, Delhi-110062, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ABDUL QAYYUM.

NAME CHANGE

I, Gaurav Jain S/O Ashok Kumar Jain R/O C 4/88, Yamuna Vihar, Delhi-110053 have changed my name to Gaurav Jain.

Public Notice

It is for general information that I Mahender Singh S/O Samay Singh, R/O H.No-19, Baprola Village, NAJFAGARH, Baprola, West Delhi, Delhi, 110043, declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as Mohinder Singh and Samey Singh in my PPO no B/02542287. The actual name of mine and my father are MAHENDER SINGH and SAMAY SINGH, respectively which may be amended accordingly.

NAME CHANGE

I MOHAMMAD AYOUB KHAN S/O MOHD JAMIL KHAN R/O H NO-4485, GALI SITARA, AJMERI GATE, DELHI-110006 have changed my name to MOHD AYUB KHAN for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I, DEEPTI GOSAIN W/O ASHISH SHARMA R/O FLAT NO 19 POCKET 03 DDA FLATS SECTOR 11, DISTRICT COURT COMPLEX DWARKA, DWARKA, DELHI-110075 have changed my name to DEEPTI SHARMA for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I SADIYA ABBAS D/O SOHAIL ABBAS R/O F-65 FIRST FLOOR SHAHEEN BAGH OKHLA NEW DELHI -110025, I have changed my name to SADIYA ABBAS Permanently for all future purposes

NAME CHANGE

I, RAHUL XOEL S/O VIJAY KUMAR GOEL R/O X-101 STREET NO.-13 BHARAMPUR MAJUPUR SEELAMPUR SHAHDARA NORTH EAST DELHI-110053 have changed my name and father's name to RAHUL KUMAR GOYAL S/O VIJAY KUMAR GOYAL for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE

I JAWERIYA D/O MOHAMMAD ASLAM RESIDING AT HOUSE NO 3004 1ST FLOOR KUCHA NEELI KANTH DARYA GANJ NEW DELHI 110002 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM JAWERIYA TO JUWERIA ASLAM FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSE

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that Shri. Tahir, son of Shri. Waheed, is the owner of a plot of land measuring 132.78 square yards (10.36 square meters), comprised in Kharsa No. 2110, situated at Gaska Park, Pargana Kothari, Tehsil Mawana, District Meerut, Uttar Pradesh. Shri. Tahir purchased the said property from Smt. Shaheen through a Sale Deed dated 08.06.2019, registered as Document No. 10583. Smt. Shaheen had purchased the property from Smt. Premwati through a Sale Deed dated 16.04.2015, registered as Document No. 5505. Smt. Premwati had purchased the property from Shri. Nareesh Kumar through a Sale Deed dated 23.02.2012, registered as Document No. 2126. Please note that the original documents have been lost, namely the Sale Deed dated 23.02.2012, registered with the Sub-Registrar, Mawana, entered in Bahi No. 1, 21d No. 3233, Pages 171 to 186, Serial No. 2126. Accordingly, the said original document is not available in respect of the above-mentioned property. An online FIR was registered on 20.06.2022 regarding the loss of the aforementioned document. Please also note that the said property is proposed to be financed by Unity Small Finance Bank, Meerut Branch, Uttar Pradesh. If any person(s) objects & regarding subject property, then kindly may submit his/her objection within 07 days from the date of the Notice in writing. The said objection may be kindly sent to the undersigned by way of the Registered Post on the address given below and by E-mail, failing which, the claim as per aforesaid shall be treated as null and void in respect of the subject property.

[ASHWANI KUMAR] Advocate
Chamber No. 122,
Tehsil Compound, Ghaziabad, U.P.

NAME CHANGE
I, Shantnu Singh S/O Ramjee Singh R/O House No.45, Street No.4, Shakti Vihar, Meethapur, Badarpur, Delhi-110044 have changed my name to Shantnu Kumar Singh.

NAME CHANGE
I hitherto known as James Patrick S/O Peter Patrick R/O A-514 Sangam Vihar New Delhi 110062, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Chanty Rao.

NAME CHANGE
I, Ganesh Parashad Gupta S/O Suraj Pershad Gupta R/O Vikashlee Apartment flat no-39 Rohini sector-13 Bhagwati hospital north west delhi-110085 changed my name to Ganesh Prasad

NAME CHANGE
I Mohd Khalid Hameed S/O Abdul Samad R/O 761-762, 3rd loor, Sheesh Mahal, Bahadur Garh Road, Sadar Bazar, Delhi - 110006 have changed my minor Daughter's name from Khatija aged 14 years to Khatija Tul Kubra for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE
Public Notice: Loss of ID Card 2543606
This is to bring to the notice of the general public that one ID Card of Mr. Juber issued by ICICI Bank Ltd., having ID Card no. 2543606 has been found missing and/or lost on 21-01-2026. Anyone, who finds the said ID Card, is requested to return the said ID Card to the Manager, Debt Services & Management Group, ICICI Bank Ltd., SD Tower, Rohini, Sec-8 Delhi. Therefore, all the customers of ICICI Bank Ltd. are hereby notified not to make any payment to any unauthorised person holding the said ID Card no. 2543606. Please take further notice that anybody making payment to any person holding the said ID Card shall do so at his/her own costs, risk and peril and ICICI Bank shall not be bound and/or responsible for any payment.
Sd/-
For ICICI Bank Limited

NAME CHANGE
I, NAJAR MOHD KHAN S/O KALE KHAN R/O E-289, GALI NO 1, CHAND BAGH, KARAWAL NAGAR, NORTH EAST DELHI, DELHI-110094 have changed my name to NAZAR MOHAMMAD permanently.

NAME CHANGE
I, K.M. VINEETA W/O RAJESH KUMAR R/O H.NO 43-A GALI NO 5, NEAR JAIL GROUND BANK COLONY DELHI-110093, I have changed my name to VINITA KASHYAP Permanently for all future purpose

NAME CHANGE
I SADIYA ABBAS D/O SOHAIL ABBAS R/O F-65 FIRST FLOOR SHAHEEN BAGH OKHLA NEW DELHI -110025, I have changed my name to SADIYA ABBAS Permanently for all future purpose

NAME CHANGE
I BHAGWAN SAHAI S/O SANT RAM R/O H.NO-269, WARD 11 KRISHANPURA GANAU, SONIPAT HARYANA 131101. I have changed my Name From BHAGWAN SAHAI MALHOTRA to BHAGWAN SAHAI for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I VINEET CHALIHA S/O CHIT-TARANJAN KUMAR CHALIHA R/O PLOT NO-172, BLOCK G, SECTOR 41, NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDDH NAGAR, UTTAR PRADESH, Pin - 201303 have changed my Name From VINEET KUMAR CHALIHA to VINEET CHALIHA for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is for general information that I ANAND KUMAR AGRAWAL S/O SURESH NARAYAN AGARWAL R/O GALI NO-21, 72/73/20/71, D BLOCK, PART-1, MUKAND PUR EXT. PART-1, NORTH WEST DELHI-110042 declare that my wife PREETI AGRAWAL expired on 6-5-2021 and death certificate was issued with registration No. MCDOLUR-0221-253731 dated 21-05-2021. Further I remarried with PRERNA AGRAWAL vide marriage certificate No. 90730000216690 dated 29-4-2025. Henceforth I declare the name of the mother of my minor son's namely AKSHIT AGRAWAL aged 10 years and my minor son namely AKSHAJ AGRAWAL aged 4 years may be known as PRERNA AGRAWAL for all Purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, Parveen Dagar, S/O Sh. Shamsher Singh Dagar, resident of H.No. 374, Sector-15 Part-1, Gurugram-122001, Haryana, state that my minor son Dhruv has been recorded as "Dhruv Chaudhary" in some records. It is clarified that "Dhruv Chaudhary" and "Dhruv Dagar" refer to one and the same person. Henceforth, he shall be known as Dhruv Dagar for all purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I, Parveen Dagar, S/O Sh. Shamsher Singh Dagar, resident of H.No. 374, Sector-15 Part-1, Gurugram-122001, Haryana, state that my minor son Surya has been recorded as "Surya Chaudhary" in some records. It is clarified that "Surya Chaudhary" and "Surya Dagar" refer to one and the same person. Henceforth, he shall be known as Dhruv Dagar for all purpose.

NAME CHANGE
I, ROHIT is legally son of No. JC-462864A Rank-NB SUB NAME- KADUS RAOSAHEB MACHINDRA Presently resident at VILL-SAROLA KASAR, POST-SAROLA KASAR TEH-AHILYANAGAR, DIST-AHILYANAGAR, (MAHARASHTRA)-414005, have changed my name from ROHIT to KADUS ROHIT RAOSAHEB for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, MOHIT MANGLA S/O SURESH MANGLA R/O House No-C-25, Near Yojna Vihar, Ashoka Niketan, Shakar Pur Baramad, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as MOHIT MANGLA

NAME CHANGE
I, RAJA BABU S/O SANTOSH KUMAR R/O RZ-64-F2 Gali No-9 Tughlakabad Extension Kalkaji, Delhi-110019, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as ABHISHEK KUMAR.

NAME CHANGE
I, KALE NAWANATH DADA, is legally father of Army No. 2812705M, Rank - Sep, Name - KALE VINOD NAWANATH, At - Dhotane Kh, Post - Hiswal Kh, Teh - Nandgaon, Dist - Nashik, State - Maharashtra, Pin - 423106, have changed my name from KALE NAWANATH DADA to NAWANATH DADA KALE for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 24/01/2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, KALE NIRMALA NAWANATH, is legally mother of Army No. 2812705M, Rank - Sep, Name - KALE VINOD NAWANATH, At - Dhotane Kh, Post - Hiswal Kh, Teh - Nandgaon, Dist - Nashik, State - Maharashtra, Pin - 423106, have changed my name from KALE NIRMALA NAWANATH to NIRMALA NAWANATH KALE and date of birth from 01/05/1970 to 01/07/1972 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 24/01/2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, ATMARAM GANPAT KONGHE is legally father of No. 2811669A Rank-HAV Name KONGHE SURESH ATMARAM presently residing at VILL-ADOLI, POST-ADOLI TEH-WASHIM, DIST-WASHIM (MAHARASHTRA)-444505, have changed my name from ATMARAM GANPAT KONGHE to ATMARAM GANPAT KONGHE and date of birth from 06/06/1970 to 01/01/1967 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, YAMUNA is legally Mother of No. 2811669A Rank-HAV Name KONGHE SURESH ATMARAM presently residing at VILL-ADOLI, POST-ADOLI TEH-WASHIM, DIST-WASHIM (MAHARASHTRA)-444505, have changed my name from YAMUNA to YAMUNA ATMARAM KONGHE and date of birth from 05/03/1970 to 01/01/1973 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, RAJARAM is legally father of No. 2808051W Rank-HAV Name BANDAGALE VIJAYKUMAR RAJARAM presently residing at VILL-LINE BAZAR, POST-KASABA BAWADA, TEH-KARVEER, DIST-KOLHAPUR (MAHARASHTRA)-416006 have changed my name from RAJARAM TO RAJARAM SHIVRAM BANDAGALE and date of birth from 03/01/1960 to 01/06/1961 for all future purposes. vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I hitherto known as Shaidd S/O Mohammad Shoiab, R/O Plot no-g/4 khasra no-15/2, meer vihar, madanpur dabas, Rani Khara, North West Delhi, Delhi - 110081, have change my name and shall hereafter be known as WAHID.

NAME CHANGE
I hitherto known as Aske Navi S/O Mohd Dulare, R/O A-475, KRISHNA-BASTI, NABI KARIM PAHARGANJ, Swami Ram Tirth Nagar S.O, Central Delhi, Delhi, 110055, have change my name and shall hereafter be known as Aksey Nabi

NAME CHANGE
I hitherto known as Izzatunisa S/O Anwar Ahmad R/O C-65, Kabutar Market Block C, Delhi have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Ghazala Jafri.

NAME CHANGE
I hitherto known as Asha Rani W/o Gulshan Bhatia R/O 99, New Rajdhani Enclave, Preet Vihar, Karkardooma, Shakarpur, Gandhi Nagar, East Delhi, Delhi-110092 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Asha Bhatia.

NAME CHANGE
I Prakash Chand Bhagat S/O Bala Dutt Bhagat R/O A-199, Madhu Vihar, Uttam Nagar, Uttam Nagar, PO: D.K Mohan Garden, DIST: West Delhi, Delhi-110059 have changed the name of my minor daughter Charu aged 14 years and she shall hereafter be known as Chahat Bhagat.

NAME CHANGE
It is for general information that I LALLAN KUMAR CHOUDHARY S/O KRISHNA CHOUDHARY R/O A-82, C Lions Enclave, Vikas Nagar, Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi-110059 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as LALLAN CHOUDHARY in my minor son VISHU CHOUDHARY aged 16 years in his Aadhar Card No-410597815233 and 10th class educational documents. The actual name of mine is LALLAN KUMAR CHOUDHARY which may be amended accordingly

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as RAGHAV BAHL S/O AJAY BAHL R/O A-3, DIPLOMATIC ENCLAVE, MALCHA MARG, CHANAKYA PURI, S.O CHANAKYA PURI, SOUTH WEST DELHI, DELHI-110021 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RAGHAV ROSHAN BAHL.

NAME CHANGE
I Babita Maheshwari W/o Gopal Nyati R/o 101 Balaji Vihar Ma Durga Nagar, Indore, Indore G.p, Madhya Pradesh - 452001, have changed my name to Babita Nyati

NAME CHANGE
I Sudha Budavanth Mesta W/o Budavanth Mesta R/o 59, Church Road, VTC- Honnavar, District- Uttara Kannada, Karnataka - 581334, have changed my name to Nagarathna

NAME CHANGE
I Fouzia Sultana D/O Mohammed Ghouseuddin and W/o Shaik Jaleel R/o 8-403/1121, Laxman Nagar, Shaikpet, VTC- Golconda, District- Hyderabad, Telangana - 500008, have changed my name to Jamsheed Asma

NAME CHANGE
I, ASHA is legally mother of No. 2810217L Rank- Hav Name AVHAD SURESH RAMDAS presently residing at VILL- CHADPADGON POST-DAPUR TEH-SINNAR DIST- NASHIK (MAHARASHTRA)-422606, have changed my name from ASHA to ASHABAI RAMDAS AVHAD and date of birth from 06/06/1968 to 01/01/1966 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 24.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as PAPPU S/O RAMLAL R/O Rammer, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh- 203155 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as POOHAJI SINGH.

NAME CHANGE
I, RAJSHREE is legally mother of No. 2808051W Rank- HAV Name BANDAGALE VIJAYKUMAR RAJARAM presently residing at VILL-LINE BAZAR, POST-KASABA BAWADA, TEH-KARVEER, DIST-KOLHAPUR (MAHARASHTRA)-416006, have changed my name from RAJSHREE TO RAJASHRI RAJARAM BANDAGALE and date of birth from 09/08/1965 to 01/11/1963 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, SHITAL is legally Wife of No. 2811890Y Rank- NK NAME SHETE DILIP SURYABHAN Presently resident of A/P WADZIRE, TEL- PARNER, DIST- AHMEDNAGAR, (MAHARASHTRA)-414307, have changed my name from SHITAL to SHITAL DILIP SHETE for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 24.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, RAMDAS is legally father of No. 2810217L Rank- HAV Name-AVHAD SURESH RAMDAS Presently resident of VILL- CHADPADGON POST-DAPUR TEH-SINNAR DIST-NASHIK (MAHARASHTRA)-422606, have changed my name from RAMDAS to RAMADAS MOHAN AVHAD and date of birth from 01/06/1963 to 01/08/1964 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, RAMDAS is legally father of No. 2810217L Rank- HAV Name-AVHAD SURESH RAMDAS Presently resident of VILL- CHADPADGON POST-DAPUR TEH-SINNAR DIST-NASHIK (MAHARASHTRA)-422606, have changed my name from RAMDAS to RAMADAS MOHAN AVHAD and date of birth from 01/06/1963 to 01/08/1964 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, MANISHA is legally Wife of No. JC-462864A Rank- NB SUB NAME- KADUS RAOSAHEB MACHINDRA Presently resident of VILL, SAROLA KASAR, POST-SAROLA KASAR TEH-AHILYANAGAR, DIST-AHILYANAGAR, (MAHARASHTRA)-414005, have changed my name from MANISHA to KADUS MANISHA RAOSAHEB for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, MANISHA is legally Wife of No. JC-462864A Rank- NB SUB NAME- KADUS RAOSAHEB MACHINDRA Presently resident of VILL, SAROLA KASAR, POST-SAROLA KASAR TEH-AHILYANAGAR, DIST-AHILYANAGAR, (MAHARASHTRA)-414005, have changed my name from MANISHA to KADUS MANISHA RAOSAHEB for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, Praveen S/O Ram Babu Gupta R/O House No. 151, Block - E - 7, Sultan Puri, Delhi - 110086 have changed my name to Praveen Gupta for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
"I, Rajiv Kumar, S/O Ram Naresh Saxena, R/O House No-1231P, 1st Floor Above UG, Sector-9, Near Govt Middle School, Gurgaon (HR)-122001, have changed my name to Rajiv Kumar Saxena.

NAME CHANGE
I, Seema Dahiya, wife of Parveen Dagar, resident of H.No. 374, Sector-15 Part-1, Gurugram-122001, Haryana, state that my name has been recorded as "Seema" in some records. It is clarified that "Seema" and "Seema Dahiya" refer to one and the same person. Henceforth, I shall be known as Seema Dahiya for all purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I Mohd Khalid Hameed S/O Abdul Samad R/O 761-762, 3rd loor, Sheesh Mahal, Bahadur Garh Road, Sadar Bazar, Delhi - 110006 have changed my minor Daughter's name from Khatija aged 14 years to Khatija Tul Kubra for all future purposes.

NAME CHANGE
I, hitherto known as PAPPU S/O RAMLAL R/O Rammer, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh- 203155 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as POOHAJI SINGH.

PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby brought to the notice of general public that Shri Shibarama Panda S/O Shri Krushna Chandra Panda Aged about 42 years R/O H.no 109-B Katwaria Sarai New Delhi-110047 has been missing since 22.01.2009 and has not been heard of or seen by his family members, relatives, friends or acquaintances till date, despite all sincere efforts to trace him. That a Missing Person Report was duly lodged at police station PS Kherki Daula Gurugram Haryana vide Civil case No CS/4595/2018 at Gurugram Haryana, but no information about his whereabouts has been received so far. That as per the provision of Section 108 of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872, a person who has not been heard of for more than seven years is presumed to be dead. Therefore, this public notice is hereby published to invite objections, if any, from any person having any claim, objection or information regarding the above-named person within 30(thirty) days from published of this notice. Name of Applicant: Shakuntala Panda, Relationship-Wife, Mobile No. 9818899153 or JM/CUM-CJ(DJ)/GGM UID NO HR-0523, Gurugram Court Haryana or Advocate Vinod Tyagi 9818899153.

NAME CHANGE
I, RAMDAS is legally father of No. 2810217L Rank- HAV Name-AVHAD SURESH RAMDAS Presently resident of VILL- CHADPADGON POST-DAPUR TEH-SINNAR DIST-NASHIK (MAHARASHTRA)-422606, have changed my name from RAMDAS to RAMADAS MOHAN AVHAD and date of birth from 01/06/1963 to 01/08/1964 for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 23.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, SHITAL is legally Wife of No. 2811890Y Rank- NK NAME SHETE DILIP SURYABHAN Presently resident of A/P WADZIRE, TEL- PARNER, DIST- AHMEDNAGAR, (MAHARASHTRA)-414307, have changed my name from SHITAL to SHITAL DILIP SHETE for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 24.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NAME CHANGE
I, SHITAL is legally Wife of No. 2811890Y Rank- NK NAME SHETE DILIP SURYABHAN Presently resident of A/P WADZIRE, TEL- PARNER, DIST- AHMEDNAGAR, (MAHARASHTRA)-414307, have changed my name from SHITAL to SHITAL DILIP SHETE for all future purposes. Vide affidavit dated 24.01.2026 before Public Notary Delhi.

NEWS BOX

Second Minneapolis shooting raises odds of US government shutdown

WASHINGTON. (Agency)
Multiple US senators said Saturday they would vote against upcoming government spending bills after federal agents killed a second American citizen in Minneapolis, significantly increasing the chances of a government shutdown next week.
Funding for large parts of the federal government, including the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) and the Pentagon, expires on January 31.
The Republican-led House of Representatives has passed the funding through September, but it still requires approval in the Senate. US President Donald Trump's Republican Party also narrowly controls the 100-member upper chamber, but does not have enough votes to pass spending bills without Democratic support. Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said in a statement Saturday that "Senate Democrats will not provide the votes to proceed to the appropriations bill if the DHS funding bill is included." Republicans had hoped to secure a few Democratic votes on the spending package, despite it including full funding for DHS, the agency carrying out Trump's controversial immigration agenda.
"I will not support the current Homeland Security funding bill," Democratic Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, one of the possible swing voters, said Saturday in a statement after the latest Minneapolis killing. The Nevada senator said the Trump administration and DHS chief Kristi Noem are "putting undertrained, combative federal agents on the streets with no accountability."
The killing of Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old Minneapolis nurse, comes just three weeks after another Minnesota resident, 37-year-old Renee Good, was also shot and killed by a federal agent. Democratic Senator Mark Warner of Virginia said "this brutal crackdown has to end" in a post on X reacting to Pretti's death Saturday.

Myanmar holds its last election round with army already certain to keep control over govt

YANGON. (Agency)
Voting began on Sunday in Myanmar in the final round of a three-stage general election, capping a nearly monthlong process that has already ensured the country's military rulers and their allies will command a parliamentary majority to form a new government. Critics say the polls are neither free nor fair, and are designed to legitimise the power of the military after it ousted the elected civilian government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021.
The army-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party, or USDP, has already won most of the seats contested in the first two rounds of voting. Twenty-five percent of the seats in the upper and lower houses of the national Parliament are reserved for the military, guaranteeing it and its allies control of the legislature. Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, who heads the current military government, is widely expected by both supporters and opponents to assume the presidency when the new Parliament meets.
Critics call the polls a sham
Critics say the polls, held under strict restrictions on public criticism, are an effort to legitimise the military's power after Min Aung Hlaing led the 2021 ouster of Suu Kyi's government.
The takeover triggered widespread opposition that dragged Myanmar into a civil war. Security concerns engendered by the fighting meant voting was not held in more than one-fifth of the country's 330 townships, another reason the process has been described as neither free nor fair.

Zelenskyy says trilateral talks ended constructively and more are possible next week

KABUL. (Agency)
Two days of talks involving representatives from Ukraine, Russia and the United States wrapped up Saturday with "constructive" discussions on "possible parameters" for ending the war, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said. Negotiators will return to the United Arab Emirates for the next round on Feb. 1, according to a U.S. official who described the meetings as upbeat and positive.
The talks are the first known instance that officials from the Trump administration have sat down with both countries as part of Washington's push for progress to end Moscow's nearly 4-year-old invasion.
"All parties agreed to report to their capitals on each aspect of the negotiations and to coordinate further steps with their leaders," Zelenskyy wrote on Telegram. The meetings covered a broad range of military and economic matters and included the possibility of a ceasefire before a deal, said the official. There was not yet an agreement on a final framework for oversight and operation of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant, which is occupied by Russia and is the largest in Europe.
The power generated from the plant will be shared "on an equitable basis," according to the official, but control of it was still undecided. Zelenskyy, meanwhile, said there was "an understanding of the need for American monitoring and control of the process of ending the war and ensuring real security." U.S. envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner participated alongside Ukrainian officials, including chief negotiator Rustem Umerov and Kyrylo Budanov, Zelenskyy's chief of staff. Russia sent military intelligence and army representatives, according to Zelenskyy.

Last two pandas in Japan are leaving for China as ties are strained

TOKYO. (Agency)
Japanese panda fans gathered Sunday for the final public viewing at Tokyo's Ueno zoo before twins Xiao Xiao and Lei Lei return to China this week. Their departure on Tuesday will leave Japan with no pandas for the first time in half a century, and the chances of getting a replacement are poor, with Tokyo's relations with Beijing at their lowest point in years. China first sent pandas to Japan in 1972, a gift meant to mark the normalisation of diplomatic ties between the two wary neighbors. The cuddly black-and-white bears immediately won Japanese hearts, and a dozen successors have become national celebrities. The latest departing panda twins have attracted massive crowds despite a one-minute viewing limit per visitor in the panda zone set by the zoo. Visitors, many of them carrying panda-themed toys, call out the bears' names and use smartphones to capture them as they nibble bamboo and stroll around. Many of those who couldn't get panda viewing

tickets still came to the zoo anyway to mark the last day. Longtime anda fan Michiko Seki, in a panda-patterned black-and-white shirt, said she was happy to see and photograph the twins looking healthy and eating well. She was using the same camera she had bought when she started taking photos of their elder sister Xian Xian that left Japan two years ago. Seki says she doesn't want to see pandas stuck in the diplomatic row. "They are the animals that can provide tremendous comfort," she said. "Japan needs pandas, and (I) hope politicians will work something out." Beijing lends pandas to other countries but maintains ownership, including over any cubs they produce. Xiao Xiao and his sister Lei Lei were born in the Ueno zoo in 2021. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun, asked about China sending new pandas to Japan, said: "I know giant pandas are loved by many in Japan, and we welcome Japanese

friends to come visit them in China." Devoted panda fan takes millions of photos Web engineer Takahiro Takauji's days revolve around pandas. It started 15



years ago when he visited the Ueno Zoological Gardens and fell in love with the twin pandas' parents, Shin Shin and Ri Ri, soon after their arrival from China. "Their shape and the way they move

are honestly so cute and funny," he told The Associated Press in a recent interview at his home near Tokyo. "Sometimes they are baby-like; at other times they act like an old man." A daily zoo visit has since become essential. He has taken more than 10 million photos of the pandas, and published a number of panda photo books. On a recent afternoon, Takauji was among thousands who entered a competitive online booking system to see the pandas one last time. During the one-minute viewing session, Takauji held his camera high above the other fans and took as many as 5,000 still shots to capture every motion of Xiao Xiao and Lei Lei. Back at home, in a room adorned with dozens of panda mascots and ornaments, Takauji carefully went through his fresh photos from the day and uploaded them on his blog, "Every Day Pandas."

Indonesia resumes search for dozens missing in deadly landslide; death toll rises to 11

The predawn landslide roared down the slopes of Mount Burangrang in West Java province on Saturday, burying some 34 houses in Pasir Langu village.

TOKYO. (Agency)
Indonesian rescuers struggled Sunday with mounds of mud, debris and water-soaked ground, searching for dozens still missing after a landslide triggered by torrential rains the day before on the country's main island of Java killed at least 11 people. The predawn landslide roared down the slopes of Mount Burangrang in West Java province on Saturday, burying some 34 houses in Pasir Langu village. On Sunday, 79 people remained missing, many feared buried under tons of mud, rocks and uprooted trees. About 230 residents living near the site have been evacuated to temporary government shelters.



Rescue workers retrieved two more bodies on Sunday morning, bringing the death toll to 11, according to Ade Dian Permiana from the search and rescue office. Videos released on

Saturday by the country's search and rescue agency, known as Basarnas, showed rescuers using farm tools and bare hands to pull a mud-caked body from the ground and placing it in an orange bag to take away for burial. Heavy equipment and excavators were mostly idle because the ground was too soft and unstable. "If the slope does not stabilise; crews are prepared to continue manually," Permiana said, estimating the height of the mounds of

mud to be up to 5 meters (16 feet).

"Some homes are buried up to the roof level," he added. Visiting the area on Sunday, Indonesian Vice President Gibran Rakabuming Raka pledged that authorities would take measures to prevent similar disasters. He urged the local authorities in West Java and West Bandung to "address the issue of land conversion in disaster-prone areas," including ways to reduce risks. Basarnas chief Mohammad Syafii confirmed to reporters after visiting the devastated Pasir Langu village with Gibran, that the terrain condition and bad weather continue to complicate search operations on Sunday.

"We are at the mercy of the weather, and the slide is still mud ... flowing and unstable," Syafii said, "With the area this wide, we'll use every asset we have ... drones, K-9 teams and ground units, but safety comes first." Seasonal rains and high tides from about October to April frequently cause flooding and landslides in Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands where millions of people live in mountainous areas or near fertile flood plains.

23-year-old Hindu man burned alive in Bangladesh; family calls it 'planned murder'

world. (Agency)
A 23-year-old Hindu youth was allegedly burned alive while sleeping inside a garage in Bangladesh's Narsingdi on Friday night. The victim has been identified as Chanchal Chandra Bhowmik, son of Khokan Chandra Bhowmik, a resident of Lakshimpur village in Cumilla district. Chanchal, who had been working at the garage for several years, was the sole breadwinner of his family, India Today reported. According to various media reports that cite witnesses, the attack occurred late on Friday night while Chanchal was sleeping inside the garage. Unidentified assailants allegedly poured petrol on the garage's shutter from outside and set it on fire. Chanchal remained trapped in the fire for a long time and died of suffocation and burn injuries, eyewitnesses said. Chanchal's family has called the

incident a "planned murder" and demanded the immediate arrest of those responsible, along with the strictest possible punishment. Police said evidence has been collected from the scene, and the process of registering a case is underway. The attackers were spotted setting fire to the garage in CCTV cameras nearby, but are yet to be identified. "We have collected footage from the CCTV cameras and observed that there is a scene showing a person moving around. We are investigating whether the fire was caused by some external factor or by an electrical fault," Narsingdi police superintendent (SP), Abdullah Al Faruque told ANI. The SP also mentioned that the fire started inside the shop, and that the fire service broke the shutter to rescue him, although his body was charred to death. "We are still investigating everything, and so far, no one has been arrested,"

he added. Over the past few weeks, Bangladesh has seen a rise in violent attacks against minorities under the interim administration led by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, with Hindus, who make up roughly 7 per cent of the population, frequently targeted. On January 18, a Hindu businessman was allegedly beaten to death in Bangladesh's Gazipur, after an argument over bananas. Earlier, two Hindus were killed in the country within 24 hours. Other recent incidents include the killing of Bajendra Biswas, 40, a member of the paramilitary Ansar Bahini, at a garment factory in Bhaluka on 29 December by a colleague; the lynching of 29-year-old Amrit Mondal over alleged extortion in Rajbari on December 24; and the lynching and immolation of 29-year-old Dipu Chandra Das over alleged blasphemy in Mymensingh on December 18.



homicide, and police are actively working to collect more information about the vehicle. Homicide investigators are working closely with the Burnaby RCMP, the Lower Mainland District Integrated Forensic Identification Service (IFIS) and the BC Coroners Service to collect evidence and advance the investigation. "The statement added that a shooting in a public place is extremely troubling, not only for the police but for the entire community. Information from witnesses and those in the area will be crucial in ensuring this investigation advances and to hold those responsible, accountable, it added.

Protesters demand immigration agents leave Minneapolis after man is shot and killed during crackdown

Political tensions escalated after family statements and bystander videos challenged federal accounts, with protests continuing in Minneapolis

MINNEAPOLIS. (Agency)
Democrats demanded that federal immigration officers leave Minnesota after a U.S. Border Patrol agent fatally shot a man in Minneapolis, drawing hundreds of protesters onto the frigid streets and increasing tensions in a city already shaken by another shooting death weeks earlier. Family members identified the man who was killed as Alex Pretti, a 37-year-old intensive care unit nurse who protested President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown in his city. After the shooting, an angry crowd gathered and protesters clashed with federal officers, who wielded batons and deployed flash bangs.

The Minnesota National Guard was assisting local police at the direction of Gov. Tim Walz, officials said. Guard troops were sent to both the shooting site and a federal building where officers have squared off with demonstrators daily. Information about what led up to the shooting was limited, Police Chief Brian O'Hara said. Department of Homeland Security spokesperson Tricia McLaughlin said in a statement that federal officers were conducting an operation and fired "defensive shots" after a man with a handgun approached them and "violently resisted" when they tried to disarm him. In bystander videos of the shooting that emerged soon after, Pretti is seen with a phone in his hand but none appears to show him with a visible weapon. O'Hara said police believe he was a "lawful gun owner with a permit to carry." DHS Secretary Kristi Noem said during a news conference that Pretti had shown up to "impede a law enforcement operation." She questioned why he was armed but did not offer details

about whether Pretti drew the weapon or brandished it at officers. The officer who shot him is an eight-year Border Patrol veteran, federal officials said. Trump blames Democrats The



president weighed in on social media by lashing out at Walz and the Minneapolis mayor. He shared images of the gun that immigration officials said was recovered and said: "What is that all about? Where

are the local Police? Why weren't they allowed to protect ICE Officers?" Trump, a Republican, said the Democratic governor and mayor are "are inciting Insurrection, with their pompous, dangerous, and arrogant rhetoric" Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York was among several Democratic lawmakers demanding federal immigration authorities leave Minnesota. She also urged Democrats to refuse to vote to fund U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, saying via social media: "We have a responsibility to protect Americans from tyranny." Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer later said that Democrats will not vote for a spending package that includes money for DHS, which oversees ICE. Schumer's statement increases the possibility that the government could partially shut down Jan. 30 when funding runs out.

Indian-origin man shot dead in Canada's Burnaby; police suspect gang war

CHANDIGARH. (Agency)
A 28-year-old Indian-origin Punjabi man was shot dead in Canada's Burnaby. The Canadian Police suspect that it may be linked to a gang war. The deceased has been identified as Dilraj Singh Gill of Vancouver, who was known to police. In a statement, Burnaby Police said that the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team (IHIT) has been called to Burnaby following a shooting that has left one person deceased. "On January 22, 2026, just before 5:30 pm, Burnaby RCMP frontline officers responded to reports of shots fired near the 3700 block of Canada Way. When police arrived on the scene, they located a male victim. Despite life-saving efforts, the man did not survive," the statement read. "Shortly after, officers located a vehicle on fire in the 5000 block of Buxton Street. Investigators are working to determine whether there may be any links to the shooting. While the investigation is still in its early stages, it's believed the shooting may have been a targeted incident. Police do not believe there is any further risk to the public. Officers will remain in the area gathering evidence as the investigation continues." In a statement, police said Gill was known to police and the shooting appears to have a nexus to the BC Gang conflict. The statement quoted Sergeant Freda Fong, "Investigators have confirmed that the vehicle located burning in the 5000 block of Buxton Street is connected to the

NEWS BOX

UP: ‘Save Constitution dialogue’ held in Sitapur

Lucknow. (Agency)

A grand and successful “Save the Constitution Dialogue” programme was organized on Saturday at Reusa Chauraha near Bazar Purwa Mor in the Sevata Assembly constituency of Sitapur district. The event witnessed a massive turnout, reflecting strong public participation and enthusiasm.

Addressing the gathering, Congress National General Secretary and Uttar Pradesh in-charge Avinash Pande said that the huge crowd at the programme sent a clear message that India is not anyone’s private property and will be governed only by Dr B.R. Ambedkar’s Constitution.

He asserted that the Congress party is firmly standing on every front against what he described as the BJP government’s anti-democratic mindset. Pande emphasized that the time has come for a decisive struggle to protect the Constitution.

Presiding over the programme, Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee President Ajay Rai announced that 30 Constitution Dialogue Mahapanchayat programmes would be organized across the state over the next 100 days, with the Sitapur event marking the beginning of this campaign.

He stated that the main objective of these Mahapanchayats is to spread public awareness about the core values of the Constitution, democratic principles, social justice, and citizens’ rights, while also exposing the failures of the Yogi government before the people.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks by local MP Rakesh Rathore, who reiterated that such dialogue programmes would continue in the future to safeguard the Constitution. Thousands of people from Sitapur and nearby areas attended the event, making it historic and highly successful.

Panchakarma Services to Be Extended to Hotels, ECHS, De-addiction Centres: DC Kangra

Dharamshala.(Agency)

Panchakarma facilities should also be made available through local hotels of HPTDC, ECHS beneficiaries and de-addiction centres to strengthen Ayurvedic healthcare delivery, Deputy Commissioner Kangra and Rogi Kalyan Samiti (RKS) Chairman Hemraj Bairwa said.

He was chairing a meeting of the Governing Body of the Rogi Kalyan Samiti of the District Ayurvedic Hospital, Dharamshala here on Friday. The meeting reviewed action taken on decisions of the previous governing body meeting held on January 16, 2024.

Bairwa directed officials to explore mutual cooperation with HPTDC hotels for providing Panchakarma facilities and to ensure necessary steps for extending Panchakarma and AYUSH services to ECHS beneficiaries. He also stressed effective inter-departmental coordination to provide Panchakarma treatment to patients at the de-addiction centre in Prayas Bhawan, Dharamshala. Senior officials of the AYUSH Department, district administration and members of the Rogi Kalyan Samiti were present at the meeting.

Vadapalani-Poonamallee metro line to undergo three-day safety check

CHENNAI.(Agency)

Chennai Metro Rail’s Phase-II stretch from Vadapalani to Poonamallee Bypass is set to cross a key regulatory milestone, with the Commissioner of Metro Rail Safety (CMRS) tentatively scheduling a three-day inspection from February 11. This will pave the way for commercial operations around mid-February or late February, said Chennai Metro Rail sources. The inspection follows the grant of a speed certificate by the railway board, a prerequisite for safety clearance. Once CMRS approval is secured, the railway board is expected to issue formal authorisation to commence passenger services, after which both the state and central governments will be notified and the opening date finalised.

Metro officials said finishing touches are under way at Vadapalani station, which will serve as the interim terminal on the Phase-II corridor. Granite flooring is being laid on the skywalk that will link the Phase-I and Phase-II stations, while lifts and escalators are being readied. Initially, passenger access to the Phase-II Vadapalani station will be routed through the existing Phase-I station. Fares will remain unchanged, sources said.

The decision to advance operations up to Vadapalani – earlier planned only by June – was driven by ridership considerations, officials indicated. Stations between Vadapalani and Porur are expected to be completed by June. The stretch is expected to significantly ease travel along the Nazarethpet Road corridor, one of the city’s busiest peak-hour stretches due to the concentration of engineering colleges such as Sashta, Alpha, Panimalar and Rajalakshmi Institute of Technology.

Metro commuters travelling via Arcot Road to Poonamallee could see journey times drop to 30-45 minutes, compared to 90 minutes to two hours during peak traffic on the road.

Chennai Metro Rail is also planning discussions with educational institutions along the corridor to improve last-mile connectivity for thousands of students commuting from Tambaram, North Chennai and Outer Ring Road suburbs, including Vandalur.

CJI: HC primary sentinel, must be proactive, not wait for knock at door

Mumbai. (Agency)

Calling High Courts the “primary sentinels”, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday said their future depends on their ability to act as “proactive courts” and urged them to “not only wait for the knock at the door but also... remain alert to systemic failures in the rule of law”.

The CJI also underlined the “power of interim relief”, and said that “justice delayed is not just justice denied, it is justice destroyed”.

The CJI was speaking on the topic ‘The sentinel on qui vive: Article 226 as the guardian of access to justice’ at the Fali Nariman Memorial Lecture. Article 226 of the Constitution grants powers to the High Courts to issue directions, including writs, to any person, authority or government to enforce fundamental rights of citizens.

“When the law is silent, the sentinel does not remain mute. We have seen High Courts issue temporary directions to protect the environment, ensure the dignity of

prisoners, and secure the rights of migrant workers during national crises. This is the principle of gap filling: the idea that the court’s writ must run wherever there is a void in justice,” the CJI said.

“The High Court is the primary sentinel, guarding the doorstep of the ordinary citizen, ensuring that the rule of law is not a distant Delhi-centric concept but a localised, breathing reality,” he added.

“Perhaps the most critical, yet overlooked, facet of access provided by Article 226 is the power of interim relief. For a small farmer whose land is being seized or a student wrongly denied admission, justice delayed is not just justice denied; it is justice destroyed. The High Court’s ability to stay an executive action at the very first hearing is often the only real ‘access’ the citizen ever experiences,” the CJI said.

“The future of the High Court

depends on its ability to act as a proactive court. The court must not only wait for the knock at the door... but it also must remain alert to systemic failures in the rule of law... The goal must be to transform ‘access to justice’ from a passive right into an active, state-guaranteed service,” he added.



The CJI also said that High Courts “must preserve their powers and also evolve their practice”, with the first frontier being the “digital gateway”. To ensure equality through technology in day-to-day court functioning, he urged courts to move beyond viewing virtual

hearings as “emergency measures” and embrace them as a “permanent pillar of accessibility”.

“In an era where a citizen’s rights are as likely to be infringed by an automated system or by burgeoning technology, our courts must adapt accordingly... It is a well-known truism that advancement in technology is further deepening the economic divide between the haves and the have-nots. Thus, technology must instead be harnessed towards ensuring judicial equality,” the CJI said. He said a tribal woman in Gadchiroli or a worker in a remote corner of the Northeast should not have to travel far to seek justice and there should be “accessibility and affordability”. The CJI further said that the gap between the rights of the citizens and the available remedies should be filled through “procedural innovation”.

Transplanting gives pigeonpea a winning edge

The method involves raising seedlings in protrays in a small nursery and shifting healthy plants to the field in sync with the first effective rains.

HYDERABAD .(Agency)

A small shift at the start of the farming season could deliver outsized gains for millions of pigeonpea growers. New research by the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics (ICRISAT) shows that transplanting pigeonpea seedlings, instead of direct seeding, can raise yields by nearly 20%, cut climate risk and shorten crop duration.

“Transplanting helps the crop bypass its most vulnerable early stage in the field, resulting in stronger vigour, better root development and more efficient use of soil moisture under rainfed conditions,” a lead scientist from ICRISAT told . The findings address a long-standing challenge in Indian agriculture: improving productivity in rainfed regions

prone to erratic rainfall and early-season drought. In trials, average yields rose from about 2.5 tonnes per hectare under direct seeding to nearly 3 tonnes with transplanting. The method involves raising seedlings in protrays in a small nursery and shifting healthy plants to the field in sync with the first effective rains. By starting the crop in a controlled environment, researchers say farmers can ensure uniform plant stands, stronger early growth and better tolerance to uneven rainfall. Pigeonpea, a key protein source and income crop for smallholders, is largely rainfed, yet national yields hover at just 0.8–0.9 tonnes per hectare, well below its realistic potential of 1.8–2.5 tonnes. ICRISAT scientists attribute this gap to weak crop establishment rather than genetics. Long-term research since 2013,

including trials across diverse agro-climatic zones, consistently showed transplanted crops outperforming direct-seeded ones under both excess and limited



moisture. Field data also indicate deeper, stronger root systems in transplanted crops, improving water and nutrient uptake and resilience to dry spells. With three to four weeks of growth completed in the nursery, crop duration in the

main field is shortened by 12–18 days, helping plants escape terminal drought during grain filling and improving grain quality. Highlighting the wider implications, ICRISAT Director General Himanshu Pathak said transplanting had transformed irrigated rice systems and could now do the same for pigeonpea under rainfed conditions. He described it as a potential game-changer for productivity and pulse self-sufficiency.

Although transplanting adds costs of around Rs 10,000 per hectare for trays, nursery media and labour, researchers say yield gains of 20–30%, lower crop failure risk and better input efficiency can offset the expense, particularly through community- or FPO-managed nurseries.

Major fire in building at Nampally traps five inside

HYDERABAD .(Agency)

A fire broke out at the Bacha’s furniture shop, a G+4 building, in Nampally on Saturday afternoon, leaving five persons, including two children, suspected to be trapped inside. The fire is believed to have started around 1 pm in the cellar and spread to the upper floors.

Those trapped were identified as Bebi (44), Syed Habib (40), Mohammed Intiaz (26), Praneeth Kumar (11) and his brother Akhil (7). Bebi worked as a watchwoman and lived in the cellar with her children. Praneeth and Akhil also stayed in the same building, where their father Thokala Yadaiah has been working as a salesman for 23 years. Habib and Intiaz were employees of the furniture shop and rushed into the building to rescue the others trapped.

Teams from the Hyderabad Disaster Response Force, Telangana police, HYDRAA and the National Disaster Response Force rushed to the spot. Fire tenders, cranes, robots and other equipment were pressed into service. Vehicular traffic on the road was completely stopped to allow movement of emergency vehicles. Power supply in the area was cut. Although the fire was brought under control, thick smoke continued to billow from the building, hampering rescue operations for several hours. Firefighters said visibility inside was almost nil due to smoke and heat. Telangana Disaster Response and Fire Services Director General Vikram Singh Mann

said the cellar and basements, meant for parking, had been used to store furniture. “It is too early to comment on the cause. It could be a short circuit or some other reason,” he said, adding that the stored furniture made access difficult. Basements illegally used to store furniture: Collector

Hyderabad Collector Dasari Harichandana said people from three families were believed to be trapped. She said two basements had been illegally



used for furniture storage, increasing the intensity of the fire. The shop owner, Satish Bacha, was absconding, she added.

A local resident who attempted a rescue said he could not proceed due to heavy smoke. “I could hear people shouting ‘open, open’, but it was too dark and smoky to go further,” he said.

Pet owners flag safety, verification lapses at civic body’s crematorium

CHENNAI .(Agency)

Pet owners and animal welfare activists have raised concerns over the possible misuse of Greater Chennai Corporation’s (GCC) pet crematorium at Kannamapet, owing to the lack of verification or examination of deceased animals brought to the facility. Workers at the facility also allegedly demand between Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 from pet owners despite the service being officially free.

Pet owners also pointed to the lack of safety within and around the premises as drunk miscreants frequented the area and there were no CCTV cameras.

Speaking to, a community dog feeder, on condition of anonymity, said in the second week of January, they took a carcass of a community dog from Saidapet to the Kannamapet crematorium. Upon arrival, at least three workers allegedly rushed towards them and competitively insisted on taking the carcass for cremation, without mentioning the formal procedure.

“When I asked for a veterinarian to examine the dog, they said it was not

Eye for an ‘Eye’! City police’s traffic initiative grabs attention of public

KOCHI.(Agency)

Like the Eye of Sauron, in J R R Tolkien’s ‘The Lord of the Rings’, this ‘Eye’ is ever-vigilant. A car left unattended in front of a grocery shop at Pachalam Junction was enough to disrupt both customers and passing traffic. With no driver in sight and the traffic congestion lengthening, the shop owner turned to the WhatsApp number of Kochi City police’s ‘Traffic Eye’ initiative. Within minutes, officers alerted the vehicle owner, who promptly arrived at the spot and removed the car. It was just one of the numerous routine alerts handled swiftly by traffic police as part of efforts to enhance road safety and manage gridlock.

Launched in 2022, Traffic Eye has gained wide acceptance among the public as well as cops, and according to data with the Kochi City police, a total of 4,745 incidents were reported to traffic police between January 1, 2025, and January 12, 2026.

Under the initiative, the public can report instances such as illegal parking and lodge complaints against private bus operators for reckless driving, refusing services, and misbehaving with passengers, and as well as against auto-rickshaws for overcharging or operating without meters.

Once a message is received on the Traffic Eye mobile system, which functions under the Kochi City traffic west unit, officers contact the concerned individuals, including the registered owner of the vehicle, and take appropriate action, an officer with the east division said. He added that once a traffic-related complaint is raised through Traffic Eye, the complainant receives an appropriate response within 30 seconds, Mohamed Nizar, assistant commissioner with the west subdivision, said personnel are deployed round the clock under the initiative, which is receiving positive public response and delivering results. “As part of the initiative, stickers were pasted inside public transport vehicles and posters were displayed in public areas. However, some people still have the misconception that traffic police should be alerted only in critical situations. In reality, we are committed to ensuring a congestion-free city and also intervene on complaints related to traffic bottlenecks and uneven traffic spots,” he said.

No Tornado bike stunt at R-Day parade in Bengaluru this year

Security has been significantly strengthened following an incident last year in which an intruder stormed the parade ground and threw a paper in protest against the government over employment issues.

Bengaluru .(Agency)

The Bengaluru Urban District Administration, along with the Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) and the Bengaluru City Police, will host the 77th Republic Day parade at the Manekshaw Parade Ground on Monday. As part of the event, 37 contingents will participate in the parade march.

Unlike previous years, the popular bike stunt by the ‘Tornado’ team of the ASC Centre will not be part of this year’s celebrations. According to the district administration, the decision was taken for two reasons.

“Last year, the event exceeded 11.45 am due to time constraints. Additionally, the Tornado team has been split and deployed in Delhi and Goa this year,” an official said. This

year’s programme will begin at 8.58 am, with the Governor unfurling the national flag at 9 a.m., followed by the guard of honour and the Republic Day address. The event is scheduled to conclude by 11 am.

GBA Chief Commissioner M Maheshwar Rao said all preparations, including the issuance of passes, entry and exit arrangements, and installation of CCTV cameras, were almost complete. “About 1,100 people will participate in the parade, including contingents from the Army, Air Force, CRPF women, Tamil Nadu State Police, Scouts and Guides, NCC, Seva



Dal and schoolchildren, forming a total of 37 marching and band groups,” he said. Around

400 children will take part in two cultural programmes organised by the Police Department. Security has been significantly strengthened following an incident last year in which an intruder stormed the parade ground and threw a paper in protest against the government over employment issues.

The GBA and the district administration have made extensive bandobast arrangements, including the installation of 100 CCTV cameras and four baggage scanners, along with systematic traffic control measures. Adequate ambulances and medical personnel have been deployed.

One more bhasha, many questions

The University Grants Commission’s recent directive ambitiously titled ‘Learn One More Bharatiya Bhasha’ presents itself as a progressive reform couched in the rhetoric of cultural pride and linguistic revival. It promises to promote multilingualism, bridge regional divides and shift India away from an ‘English-dominant framework’ to a ‘Bharatiya bhasha-centred learning ecosystem’. Yes, it sounds uplifting. However, a closer examination of both the wording and the structure of the guidelines reveals a series of long-standing anxieties that this initiative does little to address. The very title raises suspicions from states with a history of opposing central language policies. ‘Learn one more Bharatiya bhasha’ may sound innocent, but this is precisely the phrasing that Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and even Maharashtra have objected to for decades, viewing it as a thinly-disguised version of the old three-language formula. The document reaffirms that every higher education institution (HEI) must offer courses in at least three Indian languages. The logic is unclear: if the goal is multilingualism, why limit it to three?

More importantly, who decides the additional languages? Going by experience, Hindi will undoubtedly find a place, further fuelling the charge that the new guidelines are not new at all; they simply repackage an older, contentious formula in glossy language about national integration and employability. Even the celebrated idea of awarding students who learn five or more languages seems more symbolic than real.

At the postgraduate and doctoral levels, where students are deeply immersed in research, the likelihood of taking up multiple additional languages is minimal. It is hard to imagine a PhD scholar balancing coursework, fieldwork, deadlines, and the mandatory research output while simultaneously chasing certificates in four or five languages. The incentive is impressive to read, but impossible to implement. The pretence becomes even more evident as the National Education Policy’s credit structure itself has reduced the space for languages in undergraduate programmes. What used to be a three- or four-semester engagement with language learning in many institutions has now shrunk to a single semester. If the system genuinely valued multilingual learning, it would not have reduced its curricular space in the first place. Let’s examine the guidelines in detail. They insist that all HEIs offer courses at three levels—basic, intermediate and advanced—and that these courses be open to all: undergraduate and postgraduate students, doctoral scholars, teachers, staff members and even local community residents. In principle, this inclusivity sounds generous. In practice, it becomes unwieldy. Research has consistently shown that adult learners face significantly greater difficulty in acquiring new languages. Expecting students in their twenties and beyond to learn an additional language simply because an institution needs to meet an accreditation requirement is unrealistic at best and coercive at worst. The UGC quite deceptively uses the word ‘encourage’ while the incentive structure tells the real story. When national accreditation and institutional ranking scores—metrics that shape funding, reputation, admissions and research grants—are linked to compliance, no guideline can be treated as optional. Institutions cannot afford to ignore anything linked to rankings. As we saw with the Indian knowledge system mandate, colleges will likely scramble to produce rapid, symbolic compliance. Once again, the burden of this coercion will fall not on administrators, but on staff and students. Another troubling aspect of the initiative is the push to replace the so-called ‘English-dominant’ framework. While the desire to strengthen Indian languages is legitimate, the assumption that English must be pushed aside for Indian languages to flourish reflects a false binary.

BJP tightens grip on Maharashtra

Saffron party shines in civic polls, but its alliance with Shinde’s Shiv Sena remains uneasy

WE Catholics use an Italian word, “Papabili”, to identify Cardinals who have the qualities to become the Pope. There is no corresponding term in the lexicon of politics, but if there was, it would surely be used for Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who has done wonders for the BJP in the 2024 Assembly elections and the recent civic polls. Union Home Minister Amit Shah and Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath are often mentioned as the contenders to succeed PM Narendra Modi as and when he steps down. To that list, Fadnavis’ name has to be added. He has divided and weakened Bal Thackeray’s Shiv Sena and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) of Sharad Pawar, who was once hailed as the Maratha strongman but has now been reduced to a mere shadow of his former self.

Playing on the ambitions and weaknesses of his political opponents, Fadnavis first lured Eknath Shinde, a Shiv Sainik from Mumbai’s neighbouring Thane district who had risen from the ranks, to jump ship and join forces with the Hindutva brigade. Then he repeated the exercise with Sharad Pawar’s nephew Ajit. Shinde had been fearing stagnation within the Shiv Sena as the compulsions of dynastic rule had closed the doors for his progress. Shinde was made the Chief Minister of one of India’s most prosperous states, thereby sealing the split in the ranks of the “Marathi Manooos”.

Bal Thackeray, the Sena patriarch, had played on the sensibilities of the Marathi-speaking residents of Mumbai by convincing them that “outsiders” (those who spoke Gujarati at home) were robbing them of their patrimony and Tamil as well as other southerners were depriving them of white-collar jobs which could assure them of a better life. Balasaheb was an orator par excellence, a notch above even Modi. Like the Prime Minister, he could convince his audience that black was white, and vice versa. Such is the power of words when uttered by seasoned orators! Marathi-speaking people residing in Mumbai were mainly from the coastal villages and small towns south of the city in the Konkan area of the state. They joined the Sena in hordes. When asked to use muscle power to drive home their point, they did so enthusiastically. The police were not keen to stop their excesses as the ruling Congress in those days was using the Sena to neutralise the Left parties which

constituted the main opposition to its rule. The government’s pusillanimity encouraged the Sena, which soon became a force to reckon with in Mumbai.

I once had a conversation in New Delhi with then Home Minister Lal Krishna Advani. The BJP had decided to hitch its wagon to the Sena to gain a foothold in Maharashtra. I told Advani about the methods used by Bal Thackeray to assert the Sena’s dominance. I thought I was warning him of the dangers involved, not realising that the BJP was taking a calculated decision to ride on the back of the “tiger”. Advani looked at me with a glint in his eyes and dismissed my views as those of one who did not understand politics. (he was correct).

The BJP is now firmly installed as the Sena’s senior partner in Maharashtra. After the split in the Sena and the

over three years to apparently enable Shinde to win over Sena corporators who found themselves powerless after the Mahayuti government appointed its own functionaries to manage the BMC’s affairs.

The Opposition’s repeated accusations of “vote chori” can be dismissed as the rant of poor losers, but one allegation is true. A lot of money was distributed among voters during the civic polls. Today, the BJP is easily the richest party in India. The high number of its corporators elected unopposed due to last-minute withdrawals by their opponents merits scrutiny. The BJP is known to use all means, fair or foul, to achieve its goal of an Opposition-free state. These unopposed victories of its candidates were possible largely through monetary inducements.

The latest defeat of the Sena faction led by Uddhav Thackeray and the NCP outfit headed by Sharad Pawar — who fought the Pune municipal election along with his estranged nephew — has been dubbed as the “death knell” for the two leaders. Sharad Pawar should have handed over the reins of his party to Ajit in view of age-related infirmities. He will find himself isolated now. But as far as Uddhav is concerned, I do not subscribe to the idea of writing him off just yet. Shinde has made inroads into Uddhav’s territory in Mumbai, but the latter’s faction has shown that it is still alive and kicking. In Marathi-speaking localities, it bested Shinde’s candidates in most of the seats it contested.

The Shinde faction has 29 seats in the BMC, while Uddhav’s faction and his cousin Raj Thackeray’s Maharashtra Navnirman Sena together have 71. The BJP, with 89 seats, needs Shinde’s support to cross the half-way mark of 114. Shinde is using that as a tool to demand that his faction’s corporator

be made Mayor of Mumbai, at least for the initial two-and-a-half years. It will be interesting to watch how the knotty issue is resolved.

The spectacle of two allies guarding their assets from poaching by the other is comic, to say the least. Shinde has moved his party’s corporators to a five-star hotel in the city. He obviously suspects his friend, Fadnavis, of trying to get some, if not all, of them to cross over to the all-conquering BJP.

Meanwhile, the saffron party’s Hindutva agenda is set to face resistance in West Bengal, Punjab and the southern states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Religion-centric governance has not proved viable in Pakistan. Let’s hope we don’t follow in our neighbour’s footsteps.



NCP, Fadnavis set his sights on ruling the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC), which boasts of an annual budget that exceeds that of some small states. The Sena had dominated the municipality for more than two decades. It was widely rumoured that corporators appropriated 10 per cent share of the contracts signed within their jurisdiction. It was commonly understood in the city that the Sena could survive as an organised political party because of the pickings from the municipality, its sole source of funds when it was not part of Central or state governments.

Many Sena members, including corporators, crossed over to Shinde’s faction because they were deprived of their “subsistence”. The municipal elections were delayed by

Federalism at stake in Karnataka

The Tribune Editorial: Karnataka Governor’s decision to confine his customary address to a few lines — discarding the text prepared by the Council of Ministers — has triggered a storm

THE chaos in the Karnataka Assembly on Thursday is a new low in the raging conflict between Raj Bhavans (now rebranded as Lok Bhavans) and elected governments in states where the BJP is not in power. Governor Thawarchand Gehlot’s decision to confine his customary address to a few lines — discarding the text prepared by the Council of Ministers — has triggered a storm whose impact is being felt far beyond the Congress-ruled southern state. The Governor’s address at the start of the first House session of the year is a constitutional convention — rather than a personal statement, it’s expected to be a formal articulation of the state government’s policies and priorities. Gehlot, who delivered a self-drafted, truncated speech before walking out, is being accused of acting at the Centre’s behest. The bitter confrontation comes close on the heels



of similar incidents in Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Such

discord, which has become common in recent years, has fuelled the perception that the Governor is increasingly being used as a tool of political one-upmanship rather than a non-partisan bridge between the Centre and the state. The Governor has the right to raise objections to a draft address, but constitutional morality demands that such disagreements be resolved through dialogue; a faceoff on the floor of the House should be avoided at all costs.

Governance inevitably suffers when governors and state governments work at cross purposes. This is not merely a clash of egos but a litmus test of cooperative federalism. According to the Centre, the name “Raj Bhavan” has been scrapped as it reflected a colonial mindset. The new term, “Lok Bhavan”, will be truly befitting if public interest always takes precedence over political wrangling. Both power centres must respect the mandate of the people.

Stray dogs shouldn’t have to serve as sentinels for street kids

That stray dogs may offer some measure of protection to homeless children is not a romantic claim; it is an indictment.

WHEN the Supreme Court recently heard arguments on managing stray dogs in Delhi-NCR, one submission stood out for its unsettling clarity. An intervener told the court that stray dogs often act as the “last line of defence” for street children — those sleeping on pavements, railway platforms, and outside hospitals. The court listened, even asking whether the priority should be building shelters for children before moving dogs into shelters. That question should trouble us far more than the fate of stray dogs alone. The court’s January 13 proceedings reflect a difficult balancing act. On one side lie legitimate public safety concerns: a rise in dog-bite incidents, rabies-related deaths and the presence of dogs in schools and hospitals. On the other lie animal welfare laws that recognise the right of stray dogs to live, alongside statutory obligations under the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules that prioritise sterilisation, vaccination and release rather than indiscriminate removal. The Bench has rightly demanded solutions, not knee-jerk removals—calling for a better implementation of the ABC rules, designated feeding zones, shelters and even potential state compensation where failures lead to human harm. Yet, in this legal and administrative choreography, the most vulnerable stakeholder remains largely absent from state action: the street child. That stray dogs may offer some measure of protection to homeless children is not a romantic claim; it is an indictment. It reveals a governance vacuum so deep that animals have come to occupy roles that should belong to the state - protection, deterrence and companionship in spaces where children have been abandoned to fend for themselves.

India does not lack laws for children. The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act mandates identification, rescue, shelter, rehabilitation and

reintegration of children in need of care and protection. Constitutional provisions — Article 21, Article 39(f) — and India’s obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child place an unequivocal duty on the state to ensure children’s survival, dignity and development. And yet, thousands of children continue to live outside these protections, invisible to census counts, excluded from welfare databases and absent from urban planning. The Supreme Court’s stray dog case inadvertently exposes this contradiction. Crores are debated for animal shelters, feeding infrastructure and sterilisation programmes, while child care institutions remain overcrowded, underfunded or altogether missing in urban spaces where street children are most visible. The result is a cruel inversion of priorities — not because animals are being protected, but because children are not. It is important to say this clearly: framing this issue as dogs versus children is a false and dangerous binary. The court has been careful not to adopt it and civil society must resist it as well. Both stray dogs and street children are casualties of the same systemic neglect — unplanned urbanisation, weak municipal capacity, fragmented welfare delivery and a persistent tendency to respond only after tragedy strikes. The question, then, is not whether stray dogs should be removed from schools or hospitals. Public safety demands that they should. The real question is what happens next — and to whom the state turns its attention once the dogs are moved. If dogs are relocated in the name of safety, will the children who remain on the streets finally be relocated into care? Will

municipal urgency extend beyond animal control to child outreach teams, night shelters, mental health services and long-term rehabilitation? Or will the pavement simply become quieter, leaving children more exposed than before?

The court has hinted at accountability by raising the prospect of compensation for dog-bite deaths, linking

street children is treated as an unfortunate backdrop rather than a policy emergency. Children living on streets face daily exposure to violence, abuse, trafficking, substance dependence and severe mental distress — risks far greater than those posed by stray animals alone. Yet outreach teams remain sporadic, shelter capacity

is inadequate and rehabilitation pathways are poorly coordinated across states. Unlike stray dogs, whose numbers and movements are debated in courtrooms, street children remain administratively invisible. This invisibility is not accidental; it reflects chronic underinvestment, weak inter-departmental coordination and persistent failure to treat child homelessness. Stray dogs should not have to serve as sentinels for abandoned children. That they do tells us not about canine loyalty, but about state absence.

If the Supreme Court’s deliberations lead to more humane, lawful management of stray animals, that will be welcome. But if they also force us to confront a more uncomfortable truth - that India has normalised the presence of children without shelter, safety, or care - then this case may yet serve a larger constitutional purpose. Because the most unsettling question raised in that courtroom was not about dogs at all. It was this: when stray dogs are the last line of defence for street children, where is the first?



administrative failure to public harm. That same logic must apply to children. When a child is assaulted, trafficked or dies on the streets, it too is a failure of governance — no less grave, no less preventable. What is most striking is how routinely the presence of

HPTDC Hotels get golf carts to enhance tourist services

Palampur.(Agency)

In a move aimed at improving tourist facilities and boosting revenues, golf cart services have been introduced at four tourist hotels of the Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC).

Chairman of HPTDC and Vice Chairman (Cabinet Rank) of the Tourism Development Board, R.S. Bali, flagged off the golf carts from the tourism hotel in Palampur. Managing Director of Tourism Rajiv Kumar and other senior officials of the corporation were present on the occasion.

Golf cart facilities have also been provided to HPTDC hotels in Khajjiar, Chail and Kasauli, which were inaugurated by Bali through video conferencing.

Addressing the gathering, Bali said the introduction of golf carts would enhance convenience for tourists and make HPTDC hotels more attractive.

He noted that while many private hotels already offer such facilities, extending them to tourism corporation hotels is a significant step towards improving service standards. Bali said the initiative is part of a broader effort to increase the income of HPTDC hotels and attract more visitors.

He informed that two golf carts have been provided to the Chail tourism hotel, while one each has been allotted to Palampur, Kasauli and Khajjiar. The total cost of the project is approximately Rs 4.8 million.

Western disturbance alert in Himachal; heavy snowfall, rain likely from Jan 26 to 28

Dharamshala.(Agency)

Kangra Valley was lashed by rains, and the Dhauladhar mountain range experienced a snowfall during the last two days, after a long dry spell of a few months, dropping the temperature considerably.

Life was left out of gear in the valley. Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an alert for Himachal Pradesh as an active western disturbance is likely to affect the state from January 26 to January 28, bringing heavy snowfall and rainfall in several areas.

In view of the forecast, the state government has put all districts on alert and directed District Disaster Management Authorities to remain on 24x7 vigil, activate emergency response plans, and issue timely advisories to the public.

The Public Works Department (PWD) has been instructed to deploy machinery to keep roads operational, while the Electricity Board has been asked to ensure an uninterrupted power supply.

The Jal Shakti Department has been directed to maintain drinking water arrangements. Police and the Tourism Department have been told to regulate traffic and issue travel advisories wherever necessary.

All concerned departments have been asked to coordinate closely with the State Emergency Operations Centre (SEOC) and District Emergency Operations Centres (DEOC) and submit daily situation reports.

HP board revamps exam pattern; class X, XII exams from March 3

Dharamshala. (Agency)

Ending the long wait of lakhs of students and parents, the Himachal Pradesh School Education Board (HPBOSE) announced the schedule for the Annual Examination-2026, introducing major reforms in the examination pattern aimed at fairness and student welfare.

Addressing a press conference here, HPBOSE Chairman Dr Rajesh Sharma said that the Class X and Class XII examinations, including those of the State Open School (HPSOS), will commence simultaneously from March 3, 2026. He said the Board has prepared a comprehensive roadmap to ensure the timely conduct of examinations and early declaration of results.

Highlighting a major reform, Dr Sharma said that the long-standing grievance regarding different question paper series (A, B, C) has been addressed. From this year onwards, all three series will carry identical questions, with only the sequence altered through question shuffling. This, he said, would ensure uniform difficulty levels, fair evaluation, and greater credibility of the merit list.

In line with the National Education Policy (NEP) and to prepare students for competitive examinations like JEE and NEET, the Board has modernised the question paper format. Twenty per cent of the total marks will be based on Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs). To reduce exam stress, model question papers and a detailed question bank have been uploaded on the Board's official website.

Dr Sharma said the Board is aiming to declare results in record time. Special evaluation centres will be set up to complete the assessment process on a war footing, with efforts underway to announce results by April 30, 2026, enabling students to meet college admission and counselling deadlines.

To curb cheating, all examination centres will be monitored through CCTV surveillance from the Board headquarters in Dharamshala. Special flying squads have been deployed at sensitive and highly sensitive centres.

Empowering People, Building Rangla Punjab

Contd.....page-3
SIKHYA KRANTI

The Punjab Government has started "Punjab Sikhya Kranti" to improve infrastructure in all Government schools along with which the state Government is committed to make 118 Government Senior Secondary Schools as Schools of Eminence, equipped with smart classrooms, fully equipped labs and playgrounds for scientific learning. To upscale the expertise of the teachers special program has been embarked under which teachers and Principals are being sent abroad for training so that they are well versed with modern teaching practices to prepare the students for future competitions in the international arena. It is a matter of immense pride and satisfaction that Punjab has ranked first in the National Achievement Survey conducted by the Government of India, surpassing even Kerala.

CANAL WATER

At the time when I had assumed the charge of office only 21% canal water was being used in the state for irrigation purposes. However, it is a matter of great pride and satisfaction that today 63% of the canal water is being used for irrigation purposes. After assuming charge the AAP government has revived 18349 water courses with a length of 6900 KMs in the state due to which water has reached at the tail ends even in remotest villages.

ROSHAN PUNJAB

The state government has launched the Roshan Punjab campaign worth more than Rs 5000 crore to make Punjab 'first power cuts' free state of the country. None of the government at the centre or state had ever dreamt about this ambitious project but the Punjab government has

taken this historic initiative to make Punjab free from power outages, through the complete transformation of the Transmission and Distribution network. The focus is on building new infrastructure, upgrading existing systems, and enhancing maintenance in the power sector which will eliminate the issue of voltage fluctuation, especially in rural and remote areas, and significantly improve power supply.

SHAHPUR KANDI DAM

The Punjab government has gifted the people of state a landmark project worth Rs 3394.49 crore by formally inaugurating the Shahpur Kandi Project, which will significantly boost the state's electricity generation and irrigation facilities. The dam project will prove to be a blessing for farmers, industrialists, traders and common citizens. Punjab, being an agrarian state, will gain immensely from this project as it will not only increase power generation but also provide extensive irrigation facilities.

RURAL LINK ROADS

The Punjab government has embarked on the biggest road construction work taken up in the history of the state targeting 44,920 KMs of roads with a total cost of Rs 16,209 Crore. These roads will all be constructed with the five years maintenance clause ensuring highest quality standards along with the world class road safety features. The move is aimed to provide better mobility and boost rural infrastructure in the state and out of this the state government has already undertaken construction of 19,373 KMs of Rural Link Roads with a Total Cost of Rs 4092 Crore.

I N D U S T R I A L GROWTH

The state Government is committed to provide a

boost to the investment and industrial infrastructure in the State. With its earnest efforts, my Government has roped in investment proposals worth Rs 1.50 lakh crore which will create 5.20 lakh job opportunities for the youth. Leading companies like Tata Steel, Sanatan Textiles and others, are making a bee-line to invest in the state and to attract more the state government is organizing 6th Edition of Progressive Punjab Investment Summit on March 13-15 at Mohali. The state Government has also introduced Green stamp paper in the registration of sale deeds to ensure faster and smooth issuance of regulatory clearances to industry projects.

JOBS AND EMPLOYMENT

Continuing the endeavor of providing government jobs on merit to deserving candidates, my government has ensured fairness in recruitment while also ensuring efficiency. Till now 63,027 regular jobs have been given so far to youth of the state purely on the basis of merit. This has made the youth of the state an active partner in the socio-economic growth of Punjab.

ZERO TOLERANCE AGAINST CORRUPTION

As vowed while assuming charge of office, the Aam Aadmi Party Government in the state has continued to drive to eradicate corruption at an increasing pace. The state government has introduced an anti corruption helpline number 9501200200 on which any person can lodge their complaint if anyone seeks bribe from them. In order to ensure transparent governance, my Government has adopted a Zero Tolerance Policy towards corruption and the State Vigilance Bureau, Punjab has registered trap cases

Gazetted Officers, Non-Gazetted Officers and private persons who were caught red handed while accepting illegal gratification.

SADAK SURAKHYA FORCE

The state Government has launched the first of its kind initiative in the country, a dedicated Sadak Surakhiya Force to ensure enhanced security and to save precious lives on the State and National Highways. Specially trained, freshly recruited 1597 personnel are acting as the backbone to this force, who have been provided with latest, fully equipped 144 vehicles and since its launch in February last year this force has reduced the fatalities to 50.07% in case of road accidents besides returning the valuables and money of people who get injured during road accidents. The force has been deployed all along 4200 km of the Highways, prone to traffic accidents adding that in addition to patrolling in the assigned areas, they act as a deterrent for traffic violations and more.

FARISHTHEY SCHEME

The state Government has notified the FARISHTHEY scheme, in order to save the life and limb of accident victims and encourage the general public for their hassle-free participation towards helping the accidental victims. The state Government will offer a financial reward of Rs. 2000 to commend their noble deeds. Apart from financial reward, a certificate will be issued to such persons and they have been provided immunity from legal complications and police inquiries.

LAW AND ORDER

Despite being a border state, Punjab has emerged as an Oasis of peace and progress in the country and Punjab Police has started various initiatives in the form of operation CASO in

this regard. Launching of Anti Gangster Task Force (AGTF) and PGD Portal have also acted as a pivotal to check the crime in the state. AGTF has spearheaded dedicated operations against gangsters and criminals in the state and other parts of the country, leading to the arrest of several wanted gangsters and criminals and busting various gangster modules along with recovery of huge cache of arms and ammunitions.

RS. 1 CRORE TO MARTYR'S FAMILY

Recognizing the immense contribution of jawans of Armed forces, Paramilitary forces, Police and even Agnivirs in safeguarding unity and integrity of the country, the state government gives financial assistance worth Rs 1 crore to the family in case the jawans attain martyrdom in line of duty. This financial assistance is given as a mark of respect for the supreme sacrifice made by the hero for the country. This humble initiative of the state government is in recognition of the immense contribution of this son of soil towards preserving the unity, integrity and sovereignty of the country.

PROCUREMENT OF CROPS

The state government has set a new benchmark in hassle free and smooth procurement and lifting of the farmer's produce as soon as it arrives in the mandis. The harvest of farmers is lifted from the grain markets in a smooth, timely and hassle free manner to ensure that food growers do not face any sort of problem while selling their produce. In another initiative instead of only eight hour power supply in the past the farmers are now being given regular and uninterrupted power supply during the entire day.

SPORTS POLICY

The Punjab Government

had notified the State's new Sports Policy in 2023 to restore Punjab's glory in the field of sports adding that under the new Sports Policy for the first time, a whopping amount has been given to sportspersons from the state, selected to represent the country in the Asian and Olympics Games. For the first time, players from Punjab bagged 20 medals in the Asian Games, which is the highest medal tally since Asian Games started in 1951 adding that they were given a cash reward of Rs. 29.25 crore without delay. The players from the state have now performed extremely well in the Paris Olympics which is the result of this new innovative Sports policy and it is a matter of immense pride that 10 players in the Bronze medal winner Indian Hockey squad were from Punjab.

But this is not enough, we solicit your active support and cooperation for fulfilling the aspirations of our great forefathers, which could not be achieved due the apathy of those 'who did a lot of lip service in the name of freedom fighters but hardly did anything to conceptualize their dreams'. We know our way is hard because we have to overcome social maladies like unemployment, illiteracy, starvation and others. But believe me it is not impossible because with your unflinching support we can do miracles and the result will be in front of you.

We will take Punjab to a new zenith from where all of us will feel proud to be Punjabis. The dream of this 'Rangla Punjab' can be achieved through sheer hard work, dedication and commitment for which all of us must pull our socks and channelize our unbounded energy in this direction.

Jai Hind !

Chinese kite string claims Class 10 student, had turned 15 last month

Ludhiana. (Agency)

A class 10 student died after sustaining a deep cut on the neck by a Chinese kite string in Ludhiana's Samrala on Saturday, police said. Taranjot Singh, a resident of Raule village, had turned 15 a month ago and was the only child of his parents, they said.

Taranjot was on way home from school, riding pillion on a motorcycle, when the incident took place. His cousin Prabhjot Singh, who was driving the two-wheeler, also sustained injuries, they added.

Taranjot's father Harchand Singh, sarpanch of Raule village, told mediapersons that he had been creating awareness and urging villagers not to use Chinese manjha and had got several announcements made. "I had no idea that my own son will become a victim of the Chinese manjha. He was my only child," the father said. According to police, the duo was near the Samrala bypass when a kite string struck Taranjot's neck, causing a deep cut. Due to the impact, they lost balance and fell on the road. Though both had suffered cuts due to the string, Taranjot's was a major

injury. Locals rushed them to civil hospital, where Taranjot succumbed to his injuries. Prabhjot is stated to be in a stable condition.

Taranjot's grandfather Jaspal Singh said the teenager had celebrated his 15th birthday last month.

Harvinder Singh, station house officer, Samrala, said, "The incident took place on a highway. We have

been taking regular action against the sellers of this synthetic kite string. We will investigate from where this string came from". The Chinese kite string, commonly known as Chinese manjha, is a synthetic nylon or plastic-based thread coated with powdered glass, metal or other abrasive substances, making it extremely sharp. It has been responsible for numerous serious injuries and fatalities, particularly among pedestrians and two-wheeler riders, besides causing harm to birds and damage to power lines.

Despite being banned in several states, including Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, due to its lethal and non-biodegradable nature, the illegal sale and use of Chinese manjha continues unabated.



Humility through education, development through humility: Kewal Pathania

Shahpur (Kangra).(Agency)

MLA and Deputy Chief Whip of Shahpur Assembly Constituency Kewal Singh Pathania said that quality education is the strongest foundation for a progressive and self-reliant future, asserting that humility comes through education and development follows humility.

He was addressing a sub-division level programme organised on the occasion of International Education Day and on the eve of Himachal Pradesh's Full Statehood Day at the proposed Rajiv Gandhi Day-Boarding School campus of Government Senior Secondary School, Rait, where he was the chief guest. Highlighting the significance of International Education Day, observed annually on January 24, Pathania said the day underlines the crucial role of education in ensuring peace, equality, and sustainable development. Declared by the United Nations, it reinforces the right to inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all, he added. He also extended advance greetings on International Education Day and the Full Statehood Day of Himachal Pradesh. The MLA said the state government is committed to

strengthening education in rural areas and has taken key steps such as rationalisation, cluster schools, and the introduction of English from Class I. Teachers are also being sent on exposure visits to enhance teaching standards, he added.

Pathania said several premier educational institutions were established during Congress regimes and informed that Government Senior Secondary School, Rait, is being developed as a Rajiv Gandhi Day-Boarding School with a proposed building costing about Rs 5 crore. He added that modern sports facilities are also being developed at Chambi Maidan at a cost of around Rs 3 crore.

School Principal Shamsher Bharti welcomed the chief guest and shared details of academic achievements, informing that 11 students have received scholarships worth about Rs 2 lakh, while 108 others are benefiting under various scholarship schemes.

Students presented colourful cultural programmes, including a short play conveying a strong message against drug abuse under the 'Drug-Free Himachal – Drug-Free Campus' campaign.

Military Digest: When President Rajendra Prasad wanted to 'Indianise' Army soundtrack and Nehru cautioned against sudden change

Chandigarh. (Agency)

For over ten years now, Indian musical instruments have become part of the Republic Day ceremonies organised by the Indian military, including the Beat Retreat ceremony. However, few are aware that the first President of India, Rajendra Prasad, strongly pushed for the introduction of Indian musical tunes into military music to replace foreign ones.

Archival material reveals that in 1953, Rajendra Prasad had written to the then Commander-in-Chief, General Rajendrasinhji that for the past two years an attempt was being made to introduce Indian tunes which could not be played successfully on the instruments used for foreign tunes.

The President advised the Army Chief that music in the Indian Army should be developed on the basis of Indian music. He also suggested that musical instruments should be adapted and, if necessary, even changed to suit the new requirements of an

Independent India, which had become a republic three years earlier in 1950.

British marching tunes had remained the mainstay of the brass bands and pipes-and-



drums ensembles of the Indian Army, though Indian tunes were gradually being developed by Army musicians. However, these two were played on foreign instruments, and Indian instruments like sitar, santoor, mridangam, etc., were not considered conducive to them at the time. In a letter written to the President

on May 17, 1953, the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru also expressed his concerns about the adaptability of Indian music in the Army after the President sent him a copy of his letter to the Army Commander-in-Chief.

"What you have written to the Commander-in-Chief certainly deserves consideration, and I hope that the matter will be enquired into. I rather doubt, however, if it is possible or desirable to replace altogether foreign music by our own in so far as military bands are concerned," Nehru wrote in his reply to the President.

Nehru was of the view that while Indian music had made great progress in its own particular domain, there was little in it in the way of orchestral or band music. "Recently some attempts have been made. They have not been remarkably successful. From the popular point of view, the success obtained has been largely with cinema tunes, which though catchy, are hardly high class," he said.

The then PM opined that the question, therefore, was of developing orchestral and band music in accordance with the rules and conventions of Indian music. In his opinion, that was a very wide and difficult question, and it was not merely a question of adopting a tune. "The genius of Indian music and the genius of European music differ greatly and it is doubtful if one can be grafted on to the other. No doubt, one could learn from the other to some extent and be influenced by it. But, so far as I know, experts do not think it desirable, to mix these two completely different types," he said.

"Difficult to imagine people marching with these instruments"

According to Nehru, it was not a question of purely martial music but rather of music suitable for orchestras and bands, more particularly for bands on the march. He said that even the modern Indian orchestras, the very few that existed at the time, used sitars, veenas, sarangis, tablas, etc.

Indian Air Force began a fighter jet hunt 2 decades ago. It's finally nearing an end

India is reportedly in the last stages of clearing and signing an agreement with France to purchase 114 additional Rafale fighter jets for the Air Force. The deal, if it goes through, would mark the conclusion of a fighter jet hunt that the Indian Air Force began nearly two decades ago.

New Delhi.(Agency)

That was Air Chief Marshal AP Singh in February 2025 publicly pulling up officials of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited for repeated delays in deliveries of the indigenous Tejas Mk1A fighter jet. The unusually strong comments, made at Aero India 2025, brought public focus to an issue long talked-about in defence circles: The Air Force's rapidly declining fleet of fighter jets. Air Chief Marshal Singh later downplayed his rebuke of HAL as a "friendly chat" meant to get to the "conscience" of the public sector aerospace giant. But it laid bare the Air Force's deep frustration with not getting even a single one of the 83 Tejas Mk1A jets it had ordered in 2021 (deliveries still haven't begun, by the way). That frustration is born out of a decades-old fear that today is a reality: The Indian Air Force is down to its smallest fighter jet fleet since 1962. The Air Force currently has just around 30 active squadrons (each squadron has 18-20

jets) out of a sanctioned 42 that the service believes it needs to face the dual threat of China and Pakistan. And this is why the Indian Air Force will be closely watching French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to India next month, hoping that during his meeting with PM Narendra Modi, a deal to buy 114 additional Rafale fighter jets will be cleared. The deal is reportedly in the last stages of approval within the Indian government. If it goes through, it will mark the end of a nearly two-decade-long effort by the Indian Air Force to buy a modern fighter jet. **IT BEGAN WITH A MIRAGE** The journey, defence expert Sandeep Unnithan recounts on the latest episode of In Our Defence, began in the months after the 1999 Kargil war. Back then, the Indian Air Force had around 40 fighter jet squadrons, a bulk of which were the MiG-21s. The Air



Force knew that the Russian workhorses had started to near the end of their lives and that it would be a while before the indigenous light combat aircraft (LCA) programme would see its first test flight. And so, the service decided on a stop-gap bulk order of a foreign jet: The Mirage 2000, which had left the Air Force incredibly impressed with its performance during the Kargil war,

specifically in its ability to drop laser-guided bombs on Tiger Hill. The force projected a need for 126 Mirage 2000-5, the latest variant of the French fighter available then. Cleverly, the Air Force pitched the idea to the government as a requirement for "additional" Mirages rather than a procurement of a "new" aircraft -- the prospect of buying a 'new' aircraft would have invited a bureaucratic maze of fresh files, committees, and approvals. But in 2004, the government changed. The new UPA administration was not in favour of such a massive purchase from a single vendor without seeing what else was on the market. And so, the additional Mirage plan was scrapped, and the hunt went global. **THE 'MOTHER OF ALL DEALS'** This decision birthed the Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) contest -- later dubbed the "mother of all defence deals".

Republic Day 2026: 982 Police Personnel Awarded Service Medals, J&K Gets Most

New Delhi.(Agency)

On the occasion of the Republic Day 2026, gallantry and various service medals have been awarded to 982 police, fire, home guard, civil defence and correctional services personnel. The decorations included 125 gallantry medals (GM), the Union home ministry said in a statement. The maximum number of bravery medals at 45 have been given to personnel deployed in Jammu and Kashmir operations theatre, followed by 35 from Naxal violence-affected areas, and five who are posted in the north east region. Four fire service rescuers are among the gallantry medal winners, it said. A breakup provided in the official statement stated that Jammu and Kashmir Police has been decorated with the highest number of gallantry medals at 33 followed by Maharashtra Police at 31, 18 to the Uttar Pradesh Police and 14 for the Delhi Police. Among the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs), the CRPF is the only force to get bravery citations at 12 medals. The list also includes 101 President's Medal for Distinguished Service (PSM) and 756 Medal for Meritorious Service (MSM) to the officers and personnel. As per definition, a bravery medal is awarded to a person on grounds of rare conspicuous act of gallantry, and conspicuous act of gallantry in saving life and property, or in preventing crime or arresting criminals, the risk incurred being estimated with due regard to the obligations and duties of the officer concerned. PSM is awarded for special distinguished record in service and Meritorious Service is awarded for valuable service characterised by resource and devotion to duty, as per the statement.

Northeast Delhi shooting: Murder accused posts video, says killed man for grudge

New Delhi.(Agency)

The man accused of shooting a 24-year-old to death at a café in northeast Delhi allegedly posted a video on social media hours after the incident, confessing to the crime and claiming it was driven by a personal grudge, police said on Saturday. The shooting took place around 10.30 pm on Friday at Mr King Lounge and Café in Maujpur. Police found one injured person at the spot, identified as Faizan alias Fazzi of JMC Welcome. He was rushed to GTB Hospital, where he was declared brought dead. Police said he suffered fatal gunshot



wounds to the head and chest. A Forensic Science Laboratory team examined the scene and collected evidence. A case has been registered under Section 103(1) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Sections 25 and 27 of the Arms Act at Welcome police station. Several teams have been formed to identify and arrest the accused, and further investigation is underway, a police official said. In the video uploaded soon after the incident, the accused claimed responsibility for the killing, alleging that Faizan had slapped him a few months earlier. He denied the involvement of his family members and claimed there was no financial motive behind the murder.

Greater Noida's Grand Venice Project Unfit For Occupancy, Finds Supreme Court Panel

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Grand Venice Project in Greater Noida is unfit for occupancy, a Supreme Court-commissioned panel has found, citing incomplete construction as investors wait for over 15 years to take delivery of office spaces, stores, and a hotel. Basic facilities like staircases, lifts, air conditioning, restrooms, and statutory clearances are missing, noted the two-member committee in its report, flagging large-scale negligence by the project developer, Bhasin Infotech and Infrastructure Private Limited (BIPL). A mall is currently operational on the ground floor at Plot No SH3, Surajpur Site 4, Greater Noida. However, the rest of the structures remain unfinished. An estimated Rs 1,000 crore of investors' money is stuck in the project. The panel, headed by former judge Deepak Gupta and comprising senior advocate Rekha Palli as a member, noted that the developer collected a



premium price, Rs 6,500-Rs 10,000 per square foot, in 2010. Almost 75% of the allottees claimed to have paid 90% of the total consideration as a down payment. However, with the units still undelivered, many investors registered

criminal cases against BIPL and its promoter, Satinder Singh Bhasin. The committee's preliminary report was prepared by Anant Kumar, former special director general at the Central Public Works Department and former PWD engineer-in-chief, whose technical expertise was used to assess the site. At the site, Kumar found material deviations against the sanctioned plans, with a lot of work still pending. The fire clearances obtained on July 25, 2025, were valid till a height of 57.15 metres, which was the eighth floor in the project of 15 floors, he submitted. "The preliminary inspection clearly indicates that the project, in its present state, does not meet the requirements for completion, statutory compliances," he told the committee.

CBI Officer, Who Supervised RG Kar Rape-Murder Case, Gets Police Medal

New Delhi.(Agency)

V Chandrasekhar, the CBI joint director who supervised the probe in the rape and murder case of a doctor of Kolkata's RG Kar Medical College, is among 31 officers of the central agency awarded police medals on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day. A 2000-batch IPS officer from the Gujarat cadre, Chandrasekhar, has been awarded the coveted President's Medal for Distinguished Service on the occasion of Republic Day, according to the list issued by the government on Sunday. As joint director of the agency, the officer supervised the probe into the gruesome rape and murder of the trainee doctor in the hospital, leading to the conviction of the main accused in the case within months of filing the



chargesheet. Superintendent of Police Amit Srivastava, Additional Superintendent of Police Mukesh Sharma, Sub-Inspector Pramod Kumar Yati, Assistant Sub-Inspector Chaman

Lal, and Head Constable Ramu Golla have also been awarded the President's Medal for Distinguished Service. Twenty-five officers of the agency have been awarded the police medal for Meritorious Service. This includes 2007-batch IPS officer C Venkata Subba Reddy, posted as joint director in the agency and his batchmate Sadanand Shakarrao Date, who left the agency as DIG to join his cadre as inspector general. Deputy Legal Advisor Manmohan Sharma; Additional SPs Baidyanath Samal and Kailash Sahu; Deputy SPs Rubi Choudhary, Manish Kumar Upadhyay, Anmol Sachan, Nishu Kushwaha, Arijit Sinha, Sharad Suresh Bhawar, Tahair Abbas P and Dharmendra Kumar are among those awarded the Police Medal for Meritorious Service (PMMS).

Participate In Democratic Processes, Being Voter Greatest Privilege: PM Modi

New Delhi.(Agency)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged people to take part in democratic processes, saying being a voter is not just a constitutional privilege, but an important duty that gives every citizen a voice in shaping India's future. In a letter to MY-Bharat volunteers on National Voters' Day, he described voters as the decider of the destiny (bhagya vidhata) of India's development journey. "To be a voter is the greatest privilege and responsibility in a democracy. Voting is a sacred constitutional right and a mark of participation in Bharat's future," the prime minister said. "The voter is the Bhagya Vidhata of our development journey. That indelible ink on a finger is a badge of honour that ensures our democracy remains vibrant and purposeful," PM Modi said. National Voters' Day is celebrated on January 25 every year to mark the foundation day of the Election Commission of India. "Many youngsters among your

friends or relatives may be first-time voters. This is a moment of great significance for them. Our first-time voters should be welcomed into democracy as individuals who hold the power to transform the destiny of our country," he said. The prime minister said the MY-Bharat volunteers belong to a generation that does not wait for things to happen but actively participates in making things happen with a 'Can Do' spirit. "You can spread awareness about the importance of becoming a voter," he said. He complimented all those associated with the Election Commission of India for their efforts to strengthen democratic processes. "Being a voter is not just a constitutional privilege, but an important duty that gives every citizen a voice in shaping India's future," PM Modi said. "Let us honour the spirit of our democracy

by always taking part in democratic processes, thereby strengthening the foundations of a Viksit Bharat," the prime minister said. He said often people describe India as the



world's largest democracy, but at the same time, it is also the Mother of Democracy, with a history of democratic values stretching back through the centuries. "Many youngsters among your friends or relatives may be first-time voters.

This is a moment of great significance for them. Our first-time voters should be welcomed into democracy as individuals who hold the power to transform the destiny of our country," PM Modi said. He urged the youngsters to celebrate when they or a person around them becomes a voter for the first time. "At home and in our residential societies, we can celebrate the same by sharing sweets. Our schools and colleges have a vital role to play as nurseries of democratic values," he said. "I encourage them to celebrate this milestone of youth becoming first-time voters, perhaps through ceremonies that recognise students reaching voting age and make them feel truly special as they step into this new responsibility," the prime minister said. He said the people's commitment to voting is so deep that whether they live high in the Himalayas, in the islands of Andaman and Nicobar, in deserts or in dense forests, they turn up to ensure their voice is heard.

Delhi: New flyover planned on Outer Ring Road

New Delhi.(Agency)

The Delhi government has initiated the process for the construction of a new flyover on the Outer Ring Road to decongest one of the busiest traffic corridors, connecting the IFC Supplementary Drain near Keshopur Depot to Haiderpur, the officials said. The proposed flyover is expected to provide direct relief to commuters from Keshopur, Haiderpur, Punjabi Bagh, Pitampura, Shalimar Bagh, Rohini and adjoining areas of north-west Delhi, which currently witness chronic congestion during peak hours, officials said. The project aims



to ease persistent traffic bottlenecks on the Outer Ring Road, improve inter-district connectivity and ensure smoother movement for daily commuters, public transport, commercial vehicles and emergency services. As part of a structured and transparent planning process, the Public Works Department has approved consultancy services for a detailed feasibility study. The study will assess traffic volume, engineering design, environmental impact and long-term sustainability to ensure the flyover is future-ready and executed without delays. Speaking on the development, PWD Minister Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma said, "This flyover is being planned keeping the daily struggles of commuters in mind. Areas like Keshopur, Haiderpur, Punjabi Bagh, Pitampura, Shalimar Bagh and the entire Rohini belt have suffered due to heavy traffic load for years. Our government is moving with clear intent—plan properly, execute fast and deliver permanent relief." "We are ending the era of half-baked projects. Every major infrastructure work on the Outer Ring Road will now be based on technical strength, transparency and strict timelines, so that Delhi gets durable solutions, not temporary fixes," he added. The minister further said the initiative reflects the government's commitment to planned infrastructure development, congestion-free roads and accountability-driven governance.

NEWS BOX

How Sourav Ganguly guided Pretoria Capitals to SA20 final

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Sourav Ganguly's impact on the Pretoria Capitals' run to the SA20 final has gone far beyond tactics or team selections. In his first season as head coach, the former India captain has quietly reshaped the franchise's dressing-room culture, instilling calm, belief and clarity in a side that had struggled to find consistency in the previous two editions.

The Capitals sealed their place in the final with a dominant seven-wicket win over Sunrisers Eastern Cape in Qualifier 1, underlining the transformation they have undergone this season. Appointed ahead of the fourth edition of the league, Ganguly has justified the faith placed in him, guiding Pretoria to their second-ever SA20 final after they finished second in the league stage with five wins and four defeats, collecting 24 points. For captain Keshav Maharaj, Ganguly's presence has been a defining influence. The South African spinner believes the Indian legend's experience of leading teams on the biggest stages has brought a sense of composure that was previously missing. Dada was really



excited, obviously it's his first assignment as head coach. He's been a captain who won many big occasions for India and feeding off his knowledge and having someone of his stature in the change room, along with our South African legends, has brought that sense of calm," Maharaj said ahead of the final. GANGLY DRIVES POSITIVITY

Ganguly's approach, Maharaj added, has been rooted in positivity and accessibility—traits that have helped the Capitals navigate an up-and-down campaign and peak at the right time. "He's very positive and very accessible with information because he wants the best out of his players. He gives everyone the same love, care and attention that is required," Maharaj said. The turnaround has been striking. After failing to make the playoffs in the last two seasons, the Capitals, led by Maharaj on the field and guided by Ganguly off it, have rediscovered their identity. Even when results fluctuated during the league phase—particularly at home—the coaching group remained patient, focusing on basics rather than panicking under pressure. "Obviously, we've had a bit of an up-and-down season. We haven't played too well at home, to say the least, but we've found a bit of rhythm at the right time.

Badminton trailblazer: Saina Nehwal reached the peak and showed it was possible

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Before Saina Nehwal, Indian badminton hoped. After her, it believed.

Very few athletes have altered the pathway of their sport by walking first into the unknown, absorbing the hits, and leaving behind a road others could finally see. As she hangs up her boots after a career spanning two decades, Saina does so as a force that shifted belief, culture and ambition in Indian badminton. India had the likes of Prakash Padukone and Pulella Gopichand making waves at the highest level. But it was Saina who led the



revolution in the women's singles circuit, shattering perceptions and brittle systems. To go where no Indian women's singles shuttler had gone before, Saina had to be built differently. She was. She needed a support system that many before her never had. She got it. But what truly separated her was how ruthlessly she maximised every advantage available. Fearless, occasionally mistaken for arrogance, Saina carried a belief in herself that often arrived before the results did. "What really stood out was her keenness to learn," Aparna Popat, the former national champion who set the benchmarks Saina eventually shattered, told India Today. "That was her biggest strength, the willingness to do whatever it took to improve. She saw what she wanted to achieve long before anyone else did. She set her sights high and worked relentlessly. Behind it was immense sacrifice and discipline."

Her guru, Pulella Gopichand, concurs.

"Saina has been a real class athlete for India. At a time when we had role models on the men's side, the belief that women could go out and win international tournaments, Saina played a huge role in creating that shift," he told India Today. "Between 2006 and 2012, her wins created belief. That belief later became culture.

Great Expectations: India's Raipur Resurrection Ignites T20 World Cup Dreams

India's dramatic Raipur chase of 209 transforms cautious hope into intoxicating belief for T20 World Cup glory. Dickens would approve.

NEW DELHI. (Agency)

Charles Dickens is suspected to have written the script for India's next T20 World Cup. And it is called Great Expectations.

Ah yes, the Dickensian drama unfolded beautifully in Raipur on January 23rd, giving us a glimpse into the future. Chapter 1: The best of starts, the worst of starts...

India collapsed to 6 for 2 after 1.1 overs, with Sanju Samson and Abhishek departing. Actually, even this score was misleading. Samson flicked one towards deep square leg, Devon Conway misjudged the catch and parried it over the boundary. In the next over, Abhishek performed an encore, Conway did not. The last time India had lost both the openers within the first two overs was in the second T20 against South Africa in 2025.

The result: a near 50 run defeat chasing 210-plus. It seemed like a time warp—like Miss Havisham's stopped clocks in a cobwebbed house. It wasn't the best of starts. Chasing 209, losing Abhishek early, India looked orphaned of hope, much like young Pip, the protagonist of Great Expectations, in his darkest hour.

Chapter 2: The Unexpected Benefactor

Enter Ishan Kishan as India's Magwitch, the unexpected savior who transforms Pip's life. Kishan batted like a Boss who had escaped the prison of doubt and misfortune, smashing a 21-ball fifty and scored 76 off just 32 balls, rescuing India from the marshes of despair. His partnership with Suryakumar Yadav became the mysterious inheritance that changed India's fortunes entirely. Sky has been a bit of a letdown recently, belying expectations everyone has of him. His poor form over the past two years, especially under the shadow of captaincy, had been both mystery and tragedy - a once-magnificent batsman seemingly trapped in Miss Havisham's stopped time, waiting for a wedding day that

never arrived. But on this night in Raipur, the clocks finally started ticking again. SKY scored his first T20I fifty in 24 innings, an unbeaten 82 off 37 balls. Combined with the 32 off 22 in the first T20 of the series, this implies Sky is back among the runs (he was,



as he argued, never out of form anyway).

The outcome: India chased down 209 in just 15.2 overs with 28 balls to spare. It was their joint-highest successful chase in T20Is.

Chapter 3: The Dangerous Thing Called Belief The Raipur victory is, however, just the prologue to a great story that awaits this

Spring when the World Cup begins.

Scribbling at his desk, Dickens might have said after the win: India's expectations for the World Cup have swelled from cautious hope to something altogether more magnificent: that dangerous, intoxicating thing called belief. And why not? This is one of the greatest Indian teams destined to defend a World Cup title, with a few tweaks here and there. Chapter 4: An Examination of Fortunes, and Perils Like Pip's unexpected inheritance and, unlike his tragic love life, India possesses embarrassing wealth and options in their batting lineup. The Raipur chase revealed the Indian batters come in waves, relentless, ruthless. Abhishek, Ishan and Surya—the powerplay dynamites. Shivam Dubey, Hardik Pandya, Rinku Singh, Harshit Rana—the merciless finishers. Axar Patel and Tilak Varma—the unflappable warriors who can both defend and attack. That's a solid nine—and at the risk of mixing metaphors, it compares with the Fellowship of the Ring, with only Gandalf the Grey (Virat Kohli) missing.

Australian Open: Shirtless Alcaraz a hit in Melbourne, laughs off marriage proposals

MELBOURNE. (Agency)

World No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz sealed his place in the Australian Open quarter-finals on Sunday with a composed straight-sets win over Tommy Paul, delivering another statement performance under the Melbourne sun. The Spaniard handed the 19th seed a hard-court humbling, winning 7-6(6), 6-4, 7-5 at the Rod Laver Arena to reach his third successive last-eight appearance.

The opening set proved the most competitive. Paul matched Alcaraz shot for shot before the contest moved into a tense tiebreaker, which was briefly halted for around 14 minutes due to a medical emergency in the crowd. An elderly spectator was attended to by medical staff and later helped out of the arena. When play resumed, Paul double-faulted at a crucial moment, allowing Alcaraz to edge the breaker and take control of the match. From there, the top seed remained clinical. A single break of



serve in each of the next two sets was enough, with Alcaraz giving Paul very little on his own serve and calmly closing out the contest without fuss.

Crowd steals the spotlight

While the tennis was intense, the atmosphere inside Rod Laver Arena took on a playful edge. Throughout the match, fans could be heard shouting light-hearted marriage proposals at Alcaraz, with calls of "Marry

my daughter," "Marry my sister-in-law," and even a bold "Marry me" ringing out from the stands. The comments drew laughter from the crowd and smiles from the Spaniard, adding a humorous subplot to an otherwise serious encounter.

The cheers grew louder when Alcaraz changed his shirt on court, prompting a joking question during his post-match interview about whether he was encouraging the reaction. The world No. 1 laughed it off. "I don't, to be honest. I just want to feel comfortable for the interview," Alcaraz said. "I'm just

happy the people like it." With another assured performance in the books, Alcaraz now moves one step closer to the title, carrying momentum, confidence and the full backing of the Melbourne crowd. He will next face the winner of the clash between Alex de Minaur and Alexander Bublik, as his Australian Open campaign continues to gather pace.

ICC warns Pakistan of severe sanctions over T20 World Cup boycott drama: Sources

The ICC has warned Pakistan of unprecedented sanctions if it pulls out of the T20 World Cup. Sources say a boycott could cripple the PCB financially and isolate Pakistan from global cricket.

New Delhi. (Agency)

The International Cricket Council has issued a strong warning to Pakistan over the possibility of a T20 World Cup boycott, with sources indicating that such a move could trigger unprecedented sanctions. According to those familiar with the developments, a withdrawal would not only damage Pakistan's standing in world cricket but could also inflict long-term financial and structural harm on the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB). The ICC's concern follows



recent public remarks by PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi, who openly supported Bangladesh after their decision to withdraw from the tournament citing security concerns. Sources told India Today that if Pakistan chooses to follow the same route, the ICC would view it as a direct challenge to the governing body's authority, forcing it to respond firmly to protect the integrity of global tournaments. What sanctions can the ICC put on Pakistan? Sources have warned that the ICC is prepared to impose "never-before" sanctions if Pakistan opts out of the T20 World Cup. The potential measures

under consideration include: Officials familiar with the matter describe these sanctions as existential threats that could isolate Pakistan cricket from the international ecosystem. Will Pakistan boycott T20 World Cup?

Naqvi has made it clear that the PCB will not take a unilateral call on World Cup participation. Speaking to reporters, he said Pakistan's stance would be guided entirely by the government, with a final decision expected once Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif returns from abroad. "Our stance will be what the government of Pakistan instructs me. When the Prime Minister returns, I'll be able to give you our final decision. It's the government's decision. We obey them, not the ICC," Naqvi said. When asked whether the PCB had contingency plans in case Pakistan does not play the tournament, Naqvi insisted the board had multiple options in mind, stating they had "Plan A, B, C and D," without offering further detail. However, sources suggest that behind



accepted India's security concerns for not touring Pakistan in 2025, yet appears unwilling to apply the same understanding to Bangladesh," Afridi wrote on his X account. Consistency and fairness are the foundation of global cricket governance. Bangladesh's players and millions of its fans deserve respect — not mixed standards. The ICC should build bridges, not burn them," he added. Jason Gillespie also questioned the ICC's decision and asked for an explanation as to why Bangladesh were not permitted to play their T20 World Cup matches at a neutral venue, similar to India's arrangement during the Champions Trophy.

Pakistan announce T20 World Cup squad after boycott theatrics by Mohsin Naqvi

Pakistan have named their 15-member squad for the T20 World Cup 2026 after Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi's strong comments over Bangladesh's removal from the tournament. Naqvi had said that Pakistan's participation depends on their government's approval.

New Delhi. (Agency)

Pakistan have announced their 15-member squad for the T20 World Cup 2026 following boycott theatrics by Pakistan Cricket Board

(PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi. The PCB Chairman criticised the ICC for removing Bangladesh from the tournament after they refused to travel to India, citing security concerns. However, independent security assessments from both internal and external experts commissioned by the ICC concluded that there was no credible or verifiable security threat to the Bangladesh national team, its officials or supporters in India. As a result, amid Bangladesh's persistent reluctance, the ICC replaced them with Scotland. Following the decision, Naqvi expressed support for Bangladesh and stated that Pakistan's participation in the T20 World Cup 2026 would depend on the decision made by their government. However, a day after his comments, Pakistan have unveiled their squad for the World Cup and have left out senior pros Mohammad Rizwan and Haris Rauf. Rizwan hasn't been a part of Pakistan's



T20I setup for over a year, having last played the shortest format in 2024. Fast bowler Haris Rauf has also been left out of the team, following his poor show in the Asia Cup 2025 final. Veteran batter Babar Azam has retained his place in the team despite his struggles in the recent Big Bash League (BBL) 2025-26 in Australia. Led by Salman

Agha, Pakistan are placed in Group A alongside, Netherlands, USA, Namibia and India. They're scheduled to face Netherlands in their opening game on 7 February in Colombo. Ahead of the tournament, Pakistan are also set to face Australia in a three-match T20I series at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore on 29, 31 January and 1 February with the preparation starting on January 25.

Pakistan's squad for T20 World Cup 2026: Salman Ali Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Khawaja Mohammad Nafay (wk), Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Salman Mirza, Naseem Shah, Sahibzada Farhan (wk), Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan, Usman Khan (wk) and Usman Tariq.

Gratuity: How much gratuity can one get in 5, 10 or 20 years Know how to calculate

Kolkata.(Agency)
As the name gratuity implies, it is paid by a company to an employee in recognition of his/her continuous service. The right to gratuity has been placed at the same level of primacy in law like EPF (Employees Provident Fund). The Gratuity Act applies to workers and employees of establishments which have 10 or more persons in its rolls. The Gratuity Act ensures employees have the right to better gratuity terms under any agreement or contract.How do you calculate gratuity
According to the Gratuity Act, there is a formula for the calculation of gratuity and the legislation lays it down. It is a simple and straightforward. The formula is the following:
Last salary drawn by employee) x (Years of service of the employee) x (15/26)
Last drawn salary includes basic salary and DA (dearness allowance). A month typically consists of 26 working days. This fact explains the 26 in the denominator. The number 15 indicates that the calculation is done on the basis of salary of 15 days. Years of service of the employee means the number of years he/she has spent with the company in question.The most important point to note is that rules stipulate that an employee must work for 5 years without a break in order to be eligible for gratuity. However, if an employee expires before the completion of 5 years in service this condition is waived. In that situation, the entire applicable amount is paid to the next of kin or the legal heir of the employee.

How much gratuity in 5 years, 10 or 20 years
Employing the above formula, we can easily calculate the gratuity an employee will get after a period of five years of continuous service. Let's assume for simplicity that the last salary of the worker is Rs 40,000. Then in the formula we will substitute the following:

DCCDL Q3 rent income up 18% on high demand for office, retail spaces

New Delhi.(Agency)
Realty major DLF and GIC joint venture DCCDL's rental income rose 18 per cent to Rs 1,412 crore in the December quarter amid strong demand for premium office and retail spaces.
DLF Cyber City Developers Ltd (DCCDL) rental income stood at Rs 1,193 crore in the year-ago period, according to DLF's latest investors presentation.DLF holds nearly 67 per cent stake in DCCDL while Singapore's sovereign wealth fund GIC has the remaining equity shareholding.
At present, DCCDL has a total operational portfolio of 44.3 million square feet area, comprising prime office and retail spaces. Around 4 million square feet is retail area and the rest is office spaces. On financial performance front, DCCDL's net profit before exceptional item rose 40 per cent to Rs 717 crore during the third quarter of this fiscal from Rs 514 crore in the year-ago period. Total revenue grew 17 per cent to Rs 1,878 crore from Rs 1,605 crore.Its net debt stood at Rs 16,976 crore at the end of the latest December quarter.DLF Ltd, the country's largest real estate firm in terms of market capitalisation, has parked bulk of its rent yielding commercial assets in the JV firm DCCDL.In addition to the DCCDL portfolio, DLF independently has nearly 5 million square feet of office and retail spaces, taking the overall group portfolio to 49.1 million square feet area. The occupancy level in the total office and retail spaces portfolio is at 94 per cent and 97 per cent, respectively.DLF Group is constructing 27 million sq ft of commercial area, of which 15 million sq ft is by DLF Ltd directly while 12 million square feet is underDCCDL.

Budget 2026: Vedanta urges policy push for low-grade iron ore beneficiation

New Delhi.(Agency)
Vedanta's iron ore mining arm, Sesa Goa, has urged the government to provide incentives for low-grade iron ore beneficiation, emphasising that targeted policy support and infrastructure investment are critical to make the processing economically viable and to expand the sector.The low-grade iron ore beneficiation process enhances the iron content of low-quality ores by removing impurities like silica, alumina, and phosphorus, thereby making them suitable for steel production.
With India's steel demand projected to reach 300 million tonnes by 2030, unlocking low-grade reserves through beneficiation could boost domestic supply security, create jobs, and add billions to government revenues via expanded mining and exports.Currently, higher-grade ore meets domestic needs, but low-grade stockpiles offer untapped potential, provided policy hurdles like duties and regulatory delays are eased.
"India sits on massive low-grade iron ore inventory estimated at over 300 million tonnes at mine heads that remains underutilised due to high upfront costs for beneficiation plants and supporting infrastructure," said Sesa Goa CEO Navin Jaju during an interaction.Stressing the requirement for long-term investment to upgrade low-grade ore into higher-grade feedstock for domestic steel production, Jaju said, "There is a very urgent need to bring some kind of beneficial duty structure or incentive structure to beneficeite this material."
Jaju argued against export duties on low-grade ore, adding that "Export duty by far India does not need it... We have abundance of material." He advocated for free pricing to encourage sector growth, noting that proper evacuation infrastructure would enable exports while prioritising domestic beneficiation.The issue is a regular agenda item in industry ecosystems and associations, with calls for tax credits, subsidised financing, and relaxed policies to accelerate projects.Steel majors, reliant on consistent ore supply amid global price volatility, see this as pivotal for Atmanirbhar Bharat in metals.

India set to become 3rd-largest economy, but why is per capita income still low

New Delhi.(Agency)
India may be racing toward the position of the world's third-largest economy, yet one worry keeps resurfacing: why is per capita income not rising fast enough?This question shadows almost every discussion about India's growth.Economists raise it in interviews, analysts flag it in reports, and many households feel it when they sit down with their monthly budgets. The concern is valid.India's per capita income was projected at about 2,818 dollars in nominal terms, according to the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) 2025 World Economic Outlook.
In comparison, China's per-person income was estimated at more than 13,300 dollars, based on the same dataset, and advanced economies typically recorded per capita incomes above 40,000 dollars, which shows how wide the gap remains.
These gaps are real, but what often gets lost is the sequence in which large economies develop.The rise in total economic size and the slower rise in per-person income are not opposing truths. They simply exist side by side in the story of a country like

India that is expanding rapidly while still learning how to spread the gains more evenly.Many economists describe India's current phase as a twin reality.On one side, IMF estimates place India's nominal GDP at more than 4 trillion dollars in 2025 and still growing fast enough to overtake larger economies within a few years. On the other hand, the country needs to push harder to lift household incomes. The two stories do not clash. They complete each other.
DECODING INDIA'S GROWTH STORY
India's GDP growth has been remarkably resilient. Over the past decade, the country has averaged real growth of around 6.5% per year, according to the IMF. In purchasing power parity (PPP) terms, India is already the world's third-largest economy with a GDP of over 13 trillion dollars.In nominal terms, the gap with Japan has narrowed to well under one trillion dollars.Scale changes a country's influence abroad and its capacity at home. A larger economy attracts more foreign capital and strengthens global confidence. India recorded around 81 billion dollars in

FDI inflows in FY 2024–25, rising from about 71 billion dollars a year earlier, with services and manufacturing leading the investment flows—evidence of sustained

global confidence in India's market and reforms.It also alters what India can build. Government capital expenditure has surged significantly in recent years.
According to data, capital outlay was set at around Rs 11.2 lakh crore in the Union Budget for 2025–26, roughly 2.4 times the level in 2020–21, reflecting a strong policy push on infrastructure and

growth.Public and private allocations for roads, railways and urban infrastructure remain at record levels, anchoring India's push toward greater economic scale.Infrastructure expansion is also visible in energy capacity. India's installed renewable energy capacity has crossed 250 gigawatts, with a record 44.5 GW of new green energy capacity added in 2025 alone as of late 2025—a roughly 26% increase over the prior year—marking strong momentum in clean energy build-out and positioning the country among the world's top renewable markets.
Manoranjan Sharma, Chief Economist at Informerics Ratings, explains that total GDP and per capita income serve very different purposes.“Total GDP captures the absolute size of an economy. It determines geopolitical weight, bargaining power, fiscal capacity for defence, infrastructure, climate action and technology, and the ability to attract global capital and shape supply chains,” he says.

Is your Gold safe in a bank locker? RBI rules may surprise you

Under Reserve Bank of India (RBI) guidelines, the responsibility of the bank is limited — and in many cases, the loss is borne by the customer.



customers bear the financial risk in such cases.
Why You Should Get Separate Insurance
To fully protect valuable jewellery, experts recommend buying separate jewellery insurance. Such policies cover theft, fire, damage, and sometimes even loss while valuables are kept in a bank locker.To ensure smooth claims:
Keep photographs of your jewellery
Maintain updated valuation certificates
Inform the insurer that the items are stored in a locker
Check Your Locker Agreement
RBI now requires banks to follow standard locker agreements. Customers should ensure they have signed the latest version, which clearly explains rights, responsibilities, and compensation rules.A bank locker is excellent for physical safety, but it is not a complete financial safeguard. With limited bank liability and no automatic insurance, the safest approach is to combine locker storage with proper jewellery insurance.

'Quality of education, skilling and job training must improve manifold'

New Delhi.(Agency)
From reforming the skilling ecosystem to strengthening domestic supply chains, what should the next round of reforms look like? In an exclusive interaction with Dipak Mondal and Pushpita Dey, Arvind Virmani, economist and full-time Member of NITI Aayog, speaks at length on the fiscal, financial and structural measures India must pursue to sustain high growth. Excerpts:
Recent finance ministry data shows advanced GDP growth at 7.4% for FY26, compared to 6.5% last year. How do you assess India's current economic situation amid volatile global conditions?
Uncertainty is the single biggest factor affecting economies today. From our perspective, however, the big story is that India has handled this uncertainty extremely well and managed to maintain growth momentum. There were multiple shocks. Shocks do occur— that is why I always give a range, not a point estimate. This shock was unusual because it largely originated from a single source, which is unprecedented. Managing it required careful macroeconomic handling, and we have done that effectively. A demand shock is countered through fiscal or monetary measures; other shocks require different responses. The 7.4% growth outcome reflects strong macroeconomic management during FY26 so far, covering April to December.Does this make the finance minister's job easier while framing the next Budget?
The Budget is forward-looking and meant for the next year. The challenge is not whether growth is higher now, but whether we remain prepared for future shocks—domestic or external.Preparedness means maintaining adequate fiscal and policy space and the ability to respond quickly. A higher base always makes growth harder—that is simply the nature of growth. The positive development today is that reforms are raising India's underlying growth rate itself, which helps us manage uncertainty better.This Budget comes after major direct tax and GST reforms. What should be the government's focus this year?There are three taxes under the Centre's control. Media reports suggest the finance minister intends to focus on customs tariff reform, which is a very positive step. A well-designed tariff structure can strengthen domestic supply chains. International supply chain issues are already being addressed through free trade agreements, whose purpose is to integrate India into global value chains—something we missed out on decades ago. But customs duties play a critical role in developing domestic supply chains.

Lawsuit in US challenges WhatsApp's claims on end-to-end encryption

New Delhi.(Agency)
An international group of WhatsApp users has filed a lawsuit against Meta Platforms Inc, alleging that the company misled users about the privacy of their messages and falsely claimed that chats on the platform are protected by end-to-end encryption. Meta has denied the allegations, calling the suit baseless.The complaint was filed on Friday in a US District Court in San Francisco, according to a Bloomberg report. It challenges Meta's long-standing assertion that WhatsApp messages are end-to-end encrypted and therefore inaccessible to the company itself.
WhatsApp has consistently stated that

end-to-end encryption ensures only the sender and recipient can read messages, and that not even WhatsApp or its parent company can access them. Within the app, users are informed that “only people in this chat can read, listen to, or share” messages, with encryption enabled by default.However, the plaintiffs argue that these assurances do not accurately reflect how the service operates.According to the lawsuit, Meta and WhatsApp “store, analyse, and can access virtually all of WhatsApp users’ purportedly ‘private’ communications.”The filing accuses the companies and their leadership of defrauding users globally by marketing WhatsApp as a private messaging

platform while allegedly retaining access to user communications.The group of plaintiffs includes users from Australia, Brazil, India, Mexico, and South Africa. They claim that Meta stores the content of user messages and that company employees are able to access them. The complaint also refers to unnamed “whistleblowers” who allegedly helped reveal these practices, though no details about their identities or roles are provided.Meta has rejected the allegations, saying it intends to contest the lawsuit. A company spokesperson described the case as “frivolous” and said Meta would seek sanctions against the plaintiffs’ counsel.

RBI may cut rates further if India-US trade deal is delayed: Goldman Sachs

The brokerage said India's mass consumption story, especially in rural areas and among lower-income households in cities, is still in the early stages of recovery. This recovery is being supported by a good crop cycle, higher state-level transfer payments to women in lower-income families and GST cuts that benefited the bottom end of the consumption ladder.

New Delhi.(Agency)
India's strong economic fundamentals continue to support a healthy growth outlook, but prolonged uncertainty over the India–US trade deal could push the Reserve Bank of India to step in with further rate cuts. According to Goldman Sachs, if trade-related headwinds persist



beyond the first quarter of FY27 and start weighing on growth, the RBI may use its remaining policy space to support the economy through additional monetary easing.The brokerage said India's mass consumption story, especially in rural areas and among lower-income households in cities, is still in the early stages of recovery. This recovery is being supported by a good crop cycle, higher state-level transfer payments to women in

lower-income families and GST cuts that benefited the bottom end of the consumption ladder.Goldman Sachs believes these factors are helping demand gradually pick up, even though broader global uncertainties remain. In an interaction with NDTV Profit, Santanu Sengupta, Chief India Economist at Goldman Sachs, said the India–US trade deal is expected to be finalised by the first quarter of FY27.However, he warned that

if the agreement is pushed beyond this period and into the second half of the next financial year, it could create growth headwinds. In such a situation, the government and the Reserve Bank of India may need to use their policy space to support the economy.Sengupta explained that while India's overall consumption outlook remains positive, the picture is mixed across income groups. The affluent segment of consumers, which includes the middle and top income groups, saw strong growth after the Covid-19 pandemic but is now showing signs of slowing.He added that the middle-income segment faces challenges due to concerns around job creation and the increasing use of artificial intelligence. On the policy front, the central government moderated its fiscal consolidation in FY26 and shifted focus towards supporting consumption through income tax and consumption tax cuts.This helped India record a strong real GDP growth of 7.6 per cent year-on-year in calendar year 2025. However, nominal GDP growth fell to a six-year low, excluding the pandemic period, mainly because of very low inflation.



Splitsvilla X6

Diksha Pawar

Clarifies She Was Never In Relationship With Ayush Yadav: ‘We Were Simply Friends’

Diksha Pawar has been subjected to online trolls following her tussle with a fellow contestant on “Splitsvilla X6”. The trolling became more intense after netizens started questioning her connection with contestant Himanshu inside the Splitsvilla house, despite Diksha having claimed from the beginning that she was not dating Ayush Yadav.

Putting the rumour mills to rest, Diksha took to the Stories section of her Instagram and wrote, “I’d like to clarify that @ayushyadav7100 and I were never in a relationship. We’re were simply friends and collaborated on content together.” Sharing the reason why she ended up unfollowing Ayush on social media, she added, “Many people have also been asking why I unfollowed him. I did so because I didn’t want unnecessary drama, through unfortunately it still happend. I sincerely hope everyone will respect this clarification and refrain from spreading false rumours. Thankyou for your understanding and support.”

Diksha also got into a tussle with fellow contestant Akanksha, after which the opposing team has allegedly been running a negative campaign against her.

If the reports are to be believed, Diksha has also received rape and black magic threats.

Sources claim that Diksha has been living alone in Delhi, making these threats even more concerning for her. Premiered on January 9, “MTV Splitsvilla X6” is being hosted by Sunny Leone and Karan Kundrra, who is marking his debut as the show’s host. Refreshing your memory, during season eight of the show, Karan appeared as a guest.

Apart from Sunny and Karan, Uorfi and Nia Sharma have also joined the season as “mischief makers”. With 32 single girls and boys as contestants, “MTV Splitsvilla X6” enjoys the tagline ‘Pyaar ya Paisa’. As the tagline suggests, the contestants have been divided into the ‘Pyaar Villa’ and the ‘Paisa Villa’, where love and money come into play.



Ek Mahanayak Actor Atharv Karve Confirms February Wedding, To Tie The Knot In Pune



Atharv Karve, known for his role as young Dr BR Ambedkar on television, is all set to tie the knot with actress Sakshi Mahajan this February in Pune. The wedding will be an intimate celebration with family and close friends. “We wanted something personal, not rushed,” Atharv shares. “Just a few ceremonies, time with our families, and a chance to really enjoy each moment together.” Atharv speaks warmly about Sakshi, who has made her mark on Marathi television with shows like Kon Hotis Tu Kaay Zaalis Tu, Majhi Manasa, Ude Ga Ambe, and Mere Sai. “She’s not just talented, she’s grounded and brings a lot of warmth. Being around her makes everything lighter,” he says. “We understand each other in ways words can’t always explain.”

Reflecting on their relationship, Atharv smiles, “It’s funny, our first scenes together were as a married couple on screen. Who knew that years later, we’d be doing the real thing? We’ve had our ups and downs like everyone else, but being together has always felt right.”

The wedding will include traditional ceremonies spread over two days, allowing the couple to enjoy every ritual and spend quality time with loved ones. Talking about the same, Atharv says, “Marriage isn’t just one day, it’s the start of living life together. I’m thrilled that it’s with Sakshi. It feels amazing to start this journey with her by my side.”

Having grown up in the industry, Atharv began his journey as a child artist in films like Harishchandrachi Factory and Balgandharva. “Growing up on sets taught me patience and focus,” he reflects. “Every project, big or small, helped me learn about life and work. I feel lucky to have had that journey.”

‘I’m Disgusted’: Mouni Roy Faces Harassment at Event in Haryana, Shares Traumatizing Incident



Popular actress Mouni Roy has taken to her Instagram to speak about a disturbing incident she faced at an event in Karnal, Haryana. Mouni Roy shared on her social media that she was allegedly harassed by an audience member. The actress revealed how all the men of the family put their hands on her waist while clicking pictures and were not okay with her objecting to the same. She further revealed how the situation worsened once she reached the stage.

Taking to Instagram, Mouni shared, “Had an event in Karnal last and I’m disgusted with the behaviour of the guests, specially two uncles who are well-aged to be grandparents. As the event started and I walked towards the stage, uncles and family members (all men) put their hands on my waist to click pictures (sic).”

Revealing their reaction to her objection, she shared, “Didn’t like it when I said ‘Sir, please remove your hand.’” Revealing how two men in the front row passed derogatory comments, she said, “On stage is even a better story. Two uncles stood right in front, making lewd remarks, showing me lewd hand gestures, name-calling. I realised that and first politely gestured to them to not do it, to which they started throwing roses at me. It was then that mid-performance I walked towards the stage exit but immediately came back to finish my performance. They didn’t stop even after that, and no family or organisers moved them from up front.”

She continued, expressing her disgust at the angle they were filming her, adding, “Have to also mention that the stage was on a height, and these uncles were making videos from a low angle. When someone asked them to stop, they abused them. I love my country, our people, our traditions, but this? The guts. The entitlement of being men. I never put up anything negative I go through. But this. Have no words.

Have no expression or abuse that would make any sense for this behaviour. We as actors go to these events to wish the bride and the groom, to add to their celebration. We are their guests, and they harass us like this. Yuk.”

Mouni Roy, who won acclaim for her performance in The Bhootnii opposite Sanjay Dutt and Sunny Singh last year, was most recently seen in the espionage thriller Salakaar, released on OTT.

Mehendi To Fort Barwara

Prakriti Kakar

Kicks Off Grand Wedding Festivities

Wedding celebrations are officially underway for Prakriti Kakar and the singer marked the beginning of her big days with an intimate mehendi ceremony that quickly caught attention online. Videos and pictures from the function show Prakriti glowing in a soft green lehenga, detailed with mirror work and delicate embroidery. She paired the outfit with a matching dupatta, statement jewellery and fresh floral accents that kept the look elegant and understated. Her hair was styled in loose waves, with minimal makeup, letting the mehendi ceremony’s warmth shine through. The setting, decorated with marigold strings and earthy tones, added to the relaxed, celebratory mood.

Vinay Anand’s Understated Style Complements The Vibe

Standing by her side was groom-to-be Vinay Anand, who opted for a muted green kurta-pyjama, keeping things simple yet festive. Several moments from the ceremony showed the couple sharing quiet smiles, warm hugs and unguarded conversations, giving fans a glimpse into their chemistry. In one clip, Vinay is seen affectionately holding Prakriti as she is soaking in the moment.

The ceremony stayed true to its spirit, focusing on family, close friends and personal moments.

Fort Barwara Wedding And Celebrations

The mehendi marks just the beginning of a packed wedding schedule. Prakriti has confirmed that the wedding ceremony will take place at Fort Barwara, near Jaipur. The venue choice reflects the couple’s shared

love for Rajasthan’s regal charm and old-world architecture. The Fort Barwara ceremony is expected to be intimate, followed by celebrations in Delhi. A grand reception in Mumbai will wrap up the festivities, bringing together friends, family, and industry colleagues who have been part of Prakriti’s journey.

Styling, Sisters And Wedding Plans



While Prakriti has styled most of Vinay’s wedding looks herself, she has admitted that finalising her own bridal outfits involved plenty of back-and-forth. Now that fittings and selections are complete, the singer says she is finally feeling relaxed. Her sisters, Sukriti Kakar and Akriti Kakar, are playing a central role in the celebrations, from planning events to standing by her as her closest support system. With the mehendi ceremony setting the tone, the countdown to Prakriti and Vinay’s royal wedding has officially begun.



Paint your house Green this winter



Love plants, but not sure if you can maintain them with ease? Ashok kumar mundetiya tells you how to add an extra edge to your balcony garden and interiors this season...

steady temperature for indoor plants, a terrace garden needs adequate sunlight. Again, if you notice your plant becoming thin and reaching out toward the light, it needs to be closer to sunshine," informs AB Karmakar, executive/administrator for The Globe Nursery on Lindsay Street.

Maintenance of indoor plants

- Most indoor plants do best in partial shade, which works out well since indoor areas don't usually get direct sunlight. Keep this in mind before you decide to put a potted plant in a place where it will get hours of direct sunlight; you may end up exposing it for too long.

- One must select the right size of the pots. For indoor plants, go for pots either 4 inches or 6 inches in size. Allow enough space for the roots to grow. Make sure the pots are light and strong, so as to hold the plant for a long time.

- Place plastic saucers under the pots to avoid soil and water spillage.

- Ficus Elastica, Areca Palm, a variety of philodendron or dracaena are best suited for indoors. These plants can do without sunlight for 7-10 days with minimum requirement of water.

Water the plants carefully

"Water the plants as and when required. Many first-time gardeners or potted plant owners water plants more than necessary, believing that the more water the plant gets, the better they grow. While it holds true for certain plants, it can kill others," suggests Dr SL Rahman, consultant at Agri-Horticultural Society of India.

Veggies for beginners

Coriander: How many times did you get sad looking at half-dried coriander leaves (dhania) in the market? Coriander is something that is used in everyday cuisine to spice it up. And that makes it a must-grow for every kitchen garden. The seed is technically a fruit containing two seeds in it. When split, it increases the germination rate since it scarifies the seed. Take a tray with potting mix filled up to half inch from the top. Then make rows by drawing a line with your index finger or a stick. Simply sow the split coriander seeds in each row. Once done, water them and wait! It starts germinating between 5-7 days.

Potatoes: Plant potatoes during late February and March. When the green shoots begin to appear above the soil, cover them with more compost. You only need remember to water them. After 10 to 20 weeks, dig around in the soil to collect your home-grown potatoes!

Peas: It's a trouble-free crop that enjoys cooler weather. Sow them in the pots between March and June. Erect some sticks or posts for support. You'll be amazed at how good fresh peas taste and the more that you pick them, the more they produce!

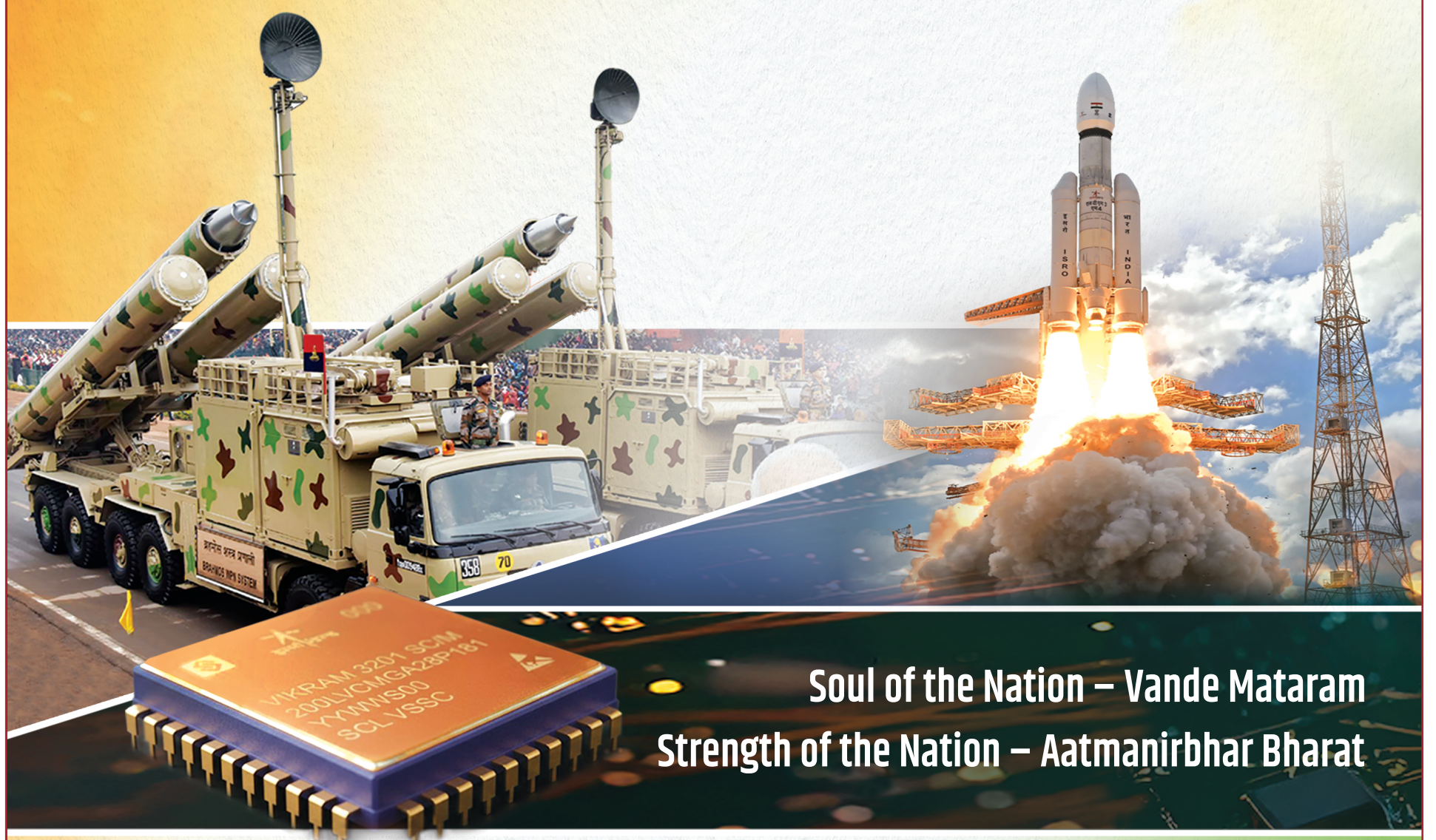
Tomato: With a little water and a lot of sun, tomato plants are quick to grow. Roots of a tomato plant grow deeper into the soil. So, choose a bush variety like 'Cherry Cascade' that can be planted in hanging baskets and window boxes. Just cut a tomato into four pieces and bury it about 1/2 an inch into the soil. Wait for 3-4 weeks for the seeds to start sprouting.

Gurugram's Southern Peripheral Road emerges as key real estate market

Gurugram: According to a survey by an online realty platform, property prices along the SPR have surged nearly 125 per cent between December 2022 and December 2025, with average prices now exceeding Rs 17,000 per sq ft. This growth reflects strong end-user demand, healthy residential absorption, and rising preference for well-planned, well-connected developments. SPR is a 16-km arterial corridor connecting Gurgaon-Faridabad Road to NH-48.



Greeting to all fellow citizens on 77th REPUBLIC DAY



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The inherent spirit of the Constitution is 'We the People.' We must move forward, with the mantra of 'Sabka Prayas'. When Viksit Bharat becomes the shared dream of 140 crore citizens, collective resolve turns aspirations into achievements.

- Narendra Modi

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Live telecast of Republic Day celebration from Kartavya Path 9:25 AM onwards on Doordarshan Network